

VERT & VENISON

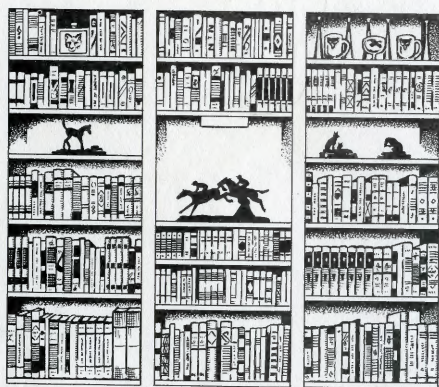
HORACE KENT TENNEY



Colonel Henry A. Siegel

JOSEPH HUSBAND

Bedford, N. Y.



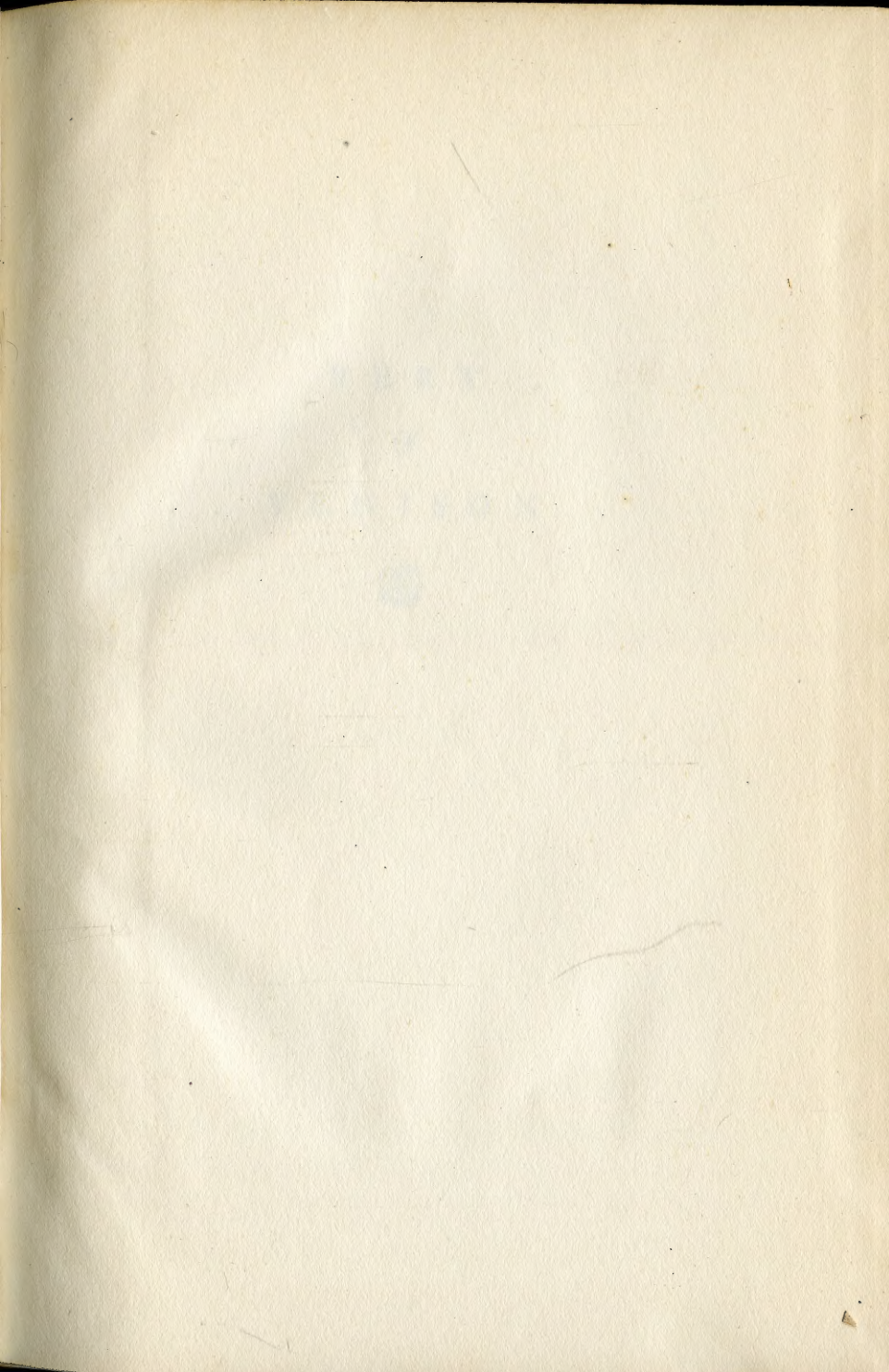
Ex Libris

JOHN AND MARTHA DANIELS

68

Spent

1250



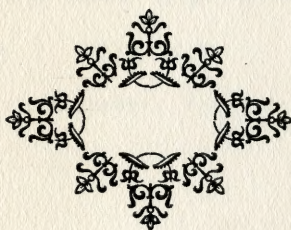
V E R T
&
V E N I S O N



Y. E. T.
B.
K. O. I. N. G. V.

VERT
&
VENISON

HORACE KENT TENNEY



Privately Printed

1924

VERT

8

VENISON

HOWARD R. T. JENKINS



NEW YORK

1894

FOREWORD

This volume is in large part made up of articles which I have written at different times during the past forty years, descriptive of some of my hunting and fishing trips. They are not in any sense published, but are printed as a convenient means of preservation

H O R A C E · K E N T · T E N N E Y

October, 1924



V E R T & V E N I S O N

C O N T E N T S

	PAGE
The Hunting Call	ix
In the Greenwood with Fenimore Cooper	1
A Leaf from a Fly-Book	10
A Trip to the North Shore	18
The Sentimental Side of Wading	29
The Song of the Merry Woodsmen	36
Red-Letter Days with the Deer	38
Mountain Lake	51
An Unsalted Luncheon	52
The Homing Thoughts of a Wandering Coureur du Bois	60
One of the Trails	61
The Cabin on the Bay	71
On Seeing Things in the Woods	73
Mink Run	83
A Letter from British Columbia	84
On a Copy of Manwood's <i>Forest Lawes</i>	104
The Forest Laws of Old England	105
Caribou, Goats and Grizzlies	141
A Christmas Grace	154



THE HUNTING CALL

*N*OW from lake and hill and woodland
Comes the hunting call again;
Hear it jingle, feel it tingle
In the blood of hunting men.

*Hear it humming, partridge drumming,
Daylight's almost here:
Greet the morning, hunter's warning,
Rouse and hunt the deer!*

*Though our heads are getting older,
Yet we meet by hill and glen;
For our blood's not getting colder,
Still we count as hunting men.*

*Hear it humming, partridge drumming,
Daylight's almost here:
Greet the morning, hunter's warning
Rouse and hunt the deer!*

*Though our trail now leads to westward
Still we follow on the track:
Pleasant is the prospect forward,
No regret in looking back.*

*Hear it humming, partridge drumming,
Sunset's drawing near:
Twilight falling, heed the calling,
Rouse and hunt the deer!*



"EVERY Forest hath two ornaments that doth grace and decorate the same, and which are, as it were the only beauty of a Forest, and the want of either of them doth in short time, not only deface and blemish a Forest, but also make a Forest to bee no Forest at all. The first of which ornaments is called *Vert*, and the second is called *Venison*." * * *

"And soe you shall understand that *Vert* in generall is every plant which doth grow within the Forest, and beare greene leafe, which may hide or cover a deere under it." * * *

"And therefore you shall understand that even as the old Foresters and good Woodmen doe by this general terme Beasts of venery, understand every beast of forest, even soe do they likewise by this general word *Venison*, understand every beast of Forest and Chase, as a word of art proper to beasts of Forest and beasts of Chase, and to none other."

Sir John Manwood's "Forest Lawes"
Edition of 1615.



VERT & VENISON

In the Greenwood with Fenimore Cooper

I SUPPOSE that every man recognizes the continuing influence upon his life of something which occurred in early youth. And looking back at a youth which, while now somewhat remote, has still a vivid freshness in retrospect, I can see how much the current of my thoughts and the direction of my interests was affected by my boyhood reading of *The Leatherstocking Tales*. For from a sort of hero worship of Natty Bumppo, under all his names, there was developed a lively interest in the woodland where he spent his life, and in the use of the rifle of which he was such a master.

Until my thirteenth year I lived in what was then a small city in that part of Wisconsin which the Indians aptly called "The Four-Lake Country." The city lay between two of these lakes, its streets running across the dividing land from one to the other, and gradually shading off into a fringe of wood-

VERT & VENISON

land and farmland which to us boys seemed a great wilderness. We lived in a square stone house at the foot of a low hill, and the street in front ran up this hill, paused at the top to see the panorama of the largest and loveliest of the lakes, and then ran down a steeper slope to its shore. At least that is what we children did when we followed the street up the hill, which to small legs seemed quite long and abrupt.

In the attic of this house my brother, my elder sister and myself spent much play time. The steep ladder-like stairway which led to it opened into the large unfinished part of the attic, which was rather dark, with black, cavernous spaces under the eaves, where the stealthy prowling of bears could be distinctly heard by a small boy, especially when he was alone. I would like to know now of a place where I could be as certain of finding bears as in that attic. The other half of the attic was partitioned off into two small rooms, lighted with skylights, and thus filled with a cheery brightness even on dark days; and it was mainly in bad weather that we played there. The walls were papered with one of those alluring designs in which bunches of grapes and sheaves of wheat run in a merry and riotous profusion and confusion from floor to ceiling. This was a secure sanctuary; and it was always a great relief to get safely past the bears' caves and into the protection of these pleasant rooms.

A neighbor and relative of my father's was appointed Minister to Switzerland, and in closing his house he turned over his very substantial library to my father for safe keeping. One of these rooms was

In the Greenwood with Fenimore Cooper

filled with shelves to receive the books, and was thus transformed into the snuggest, cosiest reading room that the heart of boyhood could desire. And it was there that James Fenimore Cooper opened up for me a long trail of woodland wandering, which happily has not yet ended.

It was to my brother that I was indebted for the discovery of the treasure which lay between the covers of these books. He was two years my senior, but more than that in his entrance into the realm of literature: for he was curled up in corners and arm-chairs reading to himself while I was still dependent upon the primal method of oral story-telling. At first I was principally interested in the "Illustrations by Darley," with which the character and characters of the *Tales* were alluringly suggested. But my brother delved deeper, and soon began to recount the thrilling adventures of Deerslayer, and Chingatchgook and Uncas. This stirred me into reading for myself; and soon I knew of Deerslayer's famous rifle "Killdeer"; of old Hutter's "Ark" on Lake Glimmerglass; how Pathfinder shot the two gulls with one bullet; how he and Jasper Eau Deuce ran the rapids in the birch canoe; how Leatherstocking shot the head off the partridge for his Christmas dinner; and how Hardheart and Mahtoree fought the gallant tournament on the sand bar in the far west, where Natty Bumpo found his last resting place. With all these characters we peopled our own little wilderness, enacting and re-enacting their adventures. And surely no author ever conferred a greater

VERT & VENISON

boon upon imaginative boyhood than did Cooper when he gave to his hero so many different names. For this enabled each of us to adopt one of these names, and thus without jealousy or confusion, to enact a title rôle. My brother was Deerslayer and I was Hawkeye; his "mark" was a dagger and mine a Maltese Cross,—though just why I considered this ancient heraldic device of the Knights of Malta appropriate for a backwoods hunter is beyond my present understanding. But with these emblems we marked trees, fences and woodpiles to indicate the boundaries beyond which the Redskins would venture at their peril.

Each of us had the appropriate weapon of his character, discarding the primitive bow and arrow for the rifle. These rifles were, however, homemade and very homemade at that, without much real difference between the ends as to danger. Mine was the first product of our workmanship, and was on the whole rather a safe affair so far as danger of explosion was concerned. It consisted of a stock cut out of a pine board, on the pattern of my father's shotgun, upon the forward end of which a small iron cannon was bound with wire. In retrospect it looks rather clumsy to me now, but nothing could exceed the proud joy with which I carried it upon expeditions which we dignified by the name of "hunting."

My brother's weapon, however, far excelled mine and was the envy of all the scouts. For his had a barrel made of gas pipe, giving to it something more of the appearance of a rifle and less of the general

In the Greenwood with Fenimore Cooper

characteristics of what Pathfinder derisively called a "carrabine." And this not only looked like a rifle, but was long enough so that he could lean upon it with the air of a frontiersman resting from the killing of his last Mingo. Mine was too short to permit of this theatrical posing, but I could carry it finely "in the hollow of my arm" like my buckskin-clad namesake. Of course my brother's gun was called "Kill-deer"; and as Deerslayer's rifle carried its own name through all the *aliases* of its owner, this left no distinctive name for mine,—a fact which gave rise to some secret heartburning, and to some criticism of the poverty of Cooper's vocabulary.

We each had bullet molds for these guns; and there was much melting of lead in the kitchen stove. One of the things which were beyond my comprehension was why the cook should have such apparently deep-seated and sincere convictions—sometimes even taking the form of violence—against this use of her stove; and this even when there were deer in the front yard, or a plain danger of Iroquois invasion. The examples which we held up for imitation, of the frontier housewife melting pewter spoons and casting bullets on the hearth while her husband fired through the loophole in the shutter, seemed to make no real impression upon her.

Our greatest pride was our powderhorns. The material for these we obtained in a very crude form at the slaughter house, closed up the large end with wood and sealing wax or resin, and then scraped the horn with glass to a marvelous smoothness and thin-

VERT & VENISON

ness. In this there was great rivalry; and the boy whose horn was so thin that you could see the powder, gloried over his fellows.

With this outfit we courted Diana—and death—in an environment which furnished an abundance of opportunity. There were myriads of ducks on the lakes, unending flights of the passenger pigeons—now extinct;—squirrels in all the trees, and song birds everywhere; and in those days any sort of bird was legitimate game for a boy. I remember too of seeing coveys of quail in the street and in the Capitol Park: and on one memorable occasion my father shot a partridge across the street from our house, while his admiring offspring, with breathless admiration, watched the killing of “real game.”

Nor were Indians to us mere literary characters. On the contrary their blanketed figures were a familiar sight on our streets. As a small boy I was introduced by my grandmother to the famous chief “Yellow-Thunder.” I well remember my gasping terror when, induced by bribery, I offered him my hand, and saw his bony brown hand and arm slide out from his blanket to seize my trembling fingers. On one occasion an Indian village on the move passed by our house, with bundles and papooses packed on *travois* poles dragging behind the ponies.

In the late '60's there was a great migration toward the western Plains; and the prairie schooner, with its rounded canvas top, pails swinging underneath and tired-looking women and excited children peering out from front and rear, was an every-day sight.

In the Greenwood with Fenimore Cooper

These, as we knew, were bound to what was then a real frontier, where actual "wild Indians" still abounded, and scalped people with somewhat sickening frequency. The grown-up sons of a neighbor came back from a surveying trip in Arizona, bringing with them a wealth of Indian trophies which created an excitement little short of delirium, especially when we saw an arrow shot into a fence board so deeply that the point showed on the other side.

All of these stimulants to outdoor adventure had their natural effect, and bred a deep and abiding interest in the woods, in woodcraft and in hunting; and we looked forward to the time when the restrictions of parental authority would so far relax that we could possess "a long-barreled, soft-metaled, true-grooved rifle."

To me this opportunity did not come until I left the large city, to which we had removed, and went to college in Vermont, my father's native state. And merely being in that historic environment was to me a great joy, very much intensified by the charm which Cooper had cast upon the whole region. In going there for the first time, I went from Albany to Lake George—the "Horicon"—passing "Bloody Pond," and the remains of Ft. William Henry, to which Hawkeye successfully guided Cora and her sister; reaching Lake Champlain at Ticonderoga, where all New England fought with Montcalm and his Huron allies. From my college windows I could see to the west the "Broad Lake," as they called that part of Champlain, with Juniper Isle, the Four Brothers,

VERT & VENISON

Rock Dunder—which the British fired at, mistaking it for a ship; and against the sunset sky the serrated outline of the Adirondacks. To the east the ridges of the Green Mountains rose, greeting the sunrise and turning to an unforgettable purple in the long shadows of afternoon. And all about were delightful woodlands where one could wander for hours without meeting a soul, but which a vivid fancy could repeople with the roving bands of hunters, *coureurs du bois*, and Indians who roved in the old “Debatable Ground” between Canada and New England. And there were the beginnings of my rifle shooting.

In a gunsmith’s window there was displayed a muzzle-loading rifle; and during my entire Freshman year I watched it with hope and apprehension,—hope that I might get together enough money to buy it without attracting attention at home; apprehension lest some more fortunate youth would anticipate me. But this calamity did not happen, and the first week of my Sophomore year I carried it proudly up the hill and hung it up in my room. And for the next two years I roamed the woodland on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons, practicing with great industry at all sorts of targets, attaining a fair degree of skill, but, best of all, getting the knack of throwing a rifle quickly to the shoulder and into the line of vision. During this time I also displayed considerable industry in neglecting my studies for the magazines on hunting, fishing and particularly rifle-shooting.

This rifle went with me to my original hunting ground when I returned there to enter the law school;

In the Greenwood with Fenimore Cooper

so that in its day it did a fair degree of wandering. And when the old muzzle-loader of Hawkeye was discarded for the repeater, the glamour of the woods and the spell with which Cooper had invested the art of hunting with the rifle held me in a firm grip, and kept open the trails of fancy which lead from the center of a busy city into the heart of the merry greenwood.

After a few years, by fortunate chance, I went on a hunting trip with the Counselor. This is a simple sentence, whose few words express a simple fact, but mean much more. For it was the beginning of a friendship and companionship which has more than a score of happy years and of interlacing trails creating an enduringly pleasant retrospect and an assuring augury for the future.

The boys of today do not seem to know Cooper as a familiar friend as did those of my own youthful days. But I hope that some other author supplies his place in their lives, and gives to them the pleasant companionship in the woods which he gave to me.

A Leaf from a Fly-Book

IT IS a rule of the profession whose members are said by Rosalind to "sleep twixt term and term," that a witness testifying in court may refer to written memoranda for the purpose of "refreshing his recollection." A memory thus assisted is commonly supposed to deliver an accurate statement of the facts; for, in theory, the writing by which the dormant memory is aroused, contains a contemporaneous and impartial record of the transaction.

By analogy to this rule, or perhaps by a relaxation of it, a sportsman should be allowed in relating his experiences, to refresh his memory from the pages of his fly-book. It contains the journal of his wanderings, and though its entries are rather disjointed, and legible only to the owner, they are surely sufficient to refresh his recollection, which is all the law contemplates. It is true the book cannot be effectually used against him on cross-examination; for its most suggestive entries consist only of scratches, water stains, old flies—kept as patterns—frayed leaders, and such like trumpery, which would puzzle Scarlet himself to use against a witness. Yet every angler can, from each page of his fly-book, read stories of the lakes and streams, and illustrate them with pictures "from the sweet face of Nature." If he can do this, his testimony is admissible, and I will maintain it in court.

A Leaf from a Fly-Book

The credibility of his story, however, is to be tested by the credulity of those who hear it. If they believe it, and try to do likewise, so much the better for them, even if they do not succeed. That is exclusively their affair; for it is another rule of the common law that a witness cannot be held responsible for the effect which his testimony may have on the bystanders.

My fly-book has journeyed with me, lo! these thirteen years. Between its covers I find the following tale, and no one can disprove it from the book.

The first trip this fly-book made was in the summer of 1882, and it went with a party of four: Colonel B, his son Charles, George C., and the writer. Our objective point after leaving Florence, Wisconsin, was a mining camp on the west shore of Chicagon Lake, where the Colonel had some men prospecting for iron ore. It was in July, and the railroad was being pushed through the woods northwest from Florence. As this was the general direction in which we were headed, it gave us what I at first thought was the advantage of walking about twelve miles on the "right-of-way,"—as it was called—a name both technically and practically appropriate. A mile or two of walking, however, showed us that the only advantage which this road possessed lay in the fact that, like the road to destruction, it was so broad and obvious that the wayfarer had no difficulty in keeping in it. Yet it was a toilsome thing to walk on. Regarded as a piece of engineering it probably had many fine points; but from the standpoint of the

VERT & VENISON

pedestrian—if one has a standpoint while walking—it was simply a long, uneven sand pile, which grew longer and more uneven and more exasperatingly remote from water as the sun journeyed higher.

We had been told that the trail to Chicagon Lake crossed the “right-of-way” about twelve miles from our starting point, and that there was a saloon at the junction of these two thoroughfares. So when we had plodded through the sand for about four hours, we began to look out for the saloon, which, from familiarity with urban customs, we assumed would be a gilded palace of iniquity, sufficiently prominent in a howling wilderness to be readily distinguished. No such place appeared. At last, however, we came to a trail, which, from its trend and position, we knew must lead to Chicagon Lake. Nailed to a blackened pine stump was a tin sign flaunting in the clear sunlight the words, “Val. Blatz, Milwaukee Beer.”

A little way off in the woods we saw a small log shanty, and assuming that this banner on the outer stump had some reference to it, we invaded its doorway. It was indeed a saloon, but one whose insidious allurements could be hardly classed as dangerous. There was but one room, about twelve feet square, and floored with a portion of the broad bosom of Mother Earth. Near the door stood two beer kegs, one on top of the other, and from the upper one, extending to a chink in the wall, there was a rough pine board, on which were some tin cups, ready for a bacchanalian orgy. Behind this bar stood the bartender. He did not wear diamonds, nor a

A Leaf from a Fly-Book

white apron; in fact nothing that he wore was, at that time, white. But he knew how to fill tin cups with beer, and put them where weary men could get hold of them. And he did it. Selah!

At the head of Chicagon Lake we got dinner, at a sort of half-way house—half way between Crystal Falls and Iron River, between civilization and savagery, between comfort and misery—and then visited an Indian village near by. I was deeply interested in the work of an old sachem, who was building a birch canoe. His tools were the simplest—an ax and a knife—and all his materials were such as could be gathered within half an hour's walk in the woods. With these he built the craft which, of all others, is most thoroughly adapted to its purposes and in sympathy with its surroundings. It is built in the woods, of the woods, and for the woods. Its owner is completely independent; for where it cannot carry him, he can carry it, and he can thus travel both by flood and field, guided only by his wishes. This independence, however, comes only from thorough familiarity with his craft, meaning both woodcraft and watercraft; for this embodiment of forest life is fickle, and decidedly restive under the touch of a 'prentice hand.

The Colonel's camp was near the lower end of the lake, and to get there, we had to overload a small, flat-bottomed skiff with ourselves and our baggage. On the way, I had my first sight of a deer in his native haunts. When we first saw him he was doing his best to get out of the native haunt in which he was

VERT & VENISON

then situated. He was in the lake, swimming for dear life, with a brawny Indian, about a hundred yards astern, in a birch-bark canoe. The savage was standing up, and putting his heart and soul into the paddle in a way that drove his canoe through the water at a most surprising rate. As the deer was rapidly nearing shore, so that overtaking him in the water seemed hopeless, the Indian dropped his paddle, picked up his Winchester, and fired twice, with no other effect than to splash water on the deer and make him go faster. So he took to paddling again, but in a few minutes the deer reached shallow water and began to wade ashore. A few shots from the rifle hastened his movements, but he went off apparently uninjured, for his white flag was flying defiantly at his spanker peak as he bounded into the woods.

We spent the night at the mining camp, and the next morning packed up blankets, provisions, etc., and built ourselves a bivouac on the lake shore. It was a very attractive place. A little point, covered with birch saplings, jutted far enough into the water beyond the general shore line to catch the breeze on both sides. There was a handy little cove in which to stow the boat; a fine swimming place, about two rods from the tent, and a choice collection of shady spots scattered around, where you could sit and think what a good time you were having.

From our camp we made various expeditions in search of fur, fin and feather. In the lake we caught perch. This statement will, no doubt, cause a turning

A Leaf from a Fly-Book

up of the noses of the sportsmen who never use anything but a fly and a split bamboo. But *nota bene*, there are perch, and there are also PERCH. It was the latter that we caught. These fellows were perfect studies in green and gold, weighed about a pound and a half each, and were almost oppressive in the attentions which they showered on even the most indifferent bait. Our boat was a rickety, cranky affair, and not at all adapted to carrying four men during the excitement of a perch soirée. So we built a raft out of cedar logs, and anchored it with a stone and a long strip of bark at the edge of the bed of rushes, where the fish most did congregate. By putting two men on the raft we were able to keep right side up in spite of the perch.

The Brûlé River, a famous trout stream, ran close to the railroad "right-of-way" at the point where we took the trail to the lake. So it was an easy matter for us to show a sportsmanlike appreciation of the presence of *salmo fontinalis* by going there. We made several trips, each time with gratifying results. I remember one day in particular, when three of us stood about twenty feet apart, knee-deep in the swirling water, with the bright sun on our backs, and in defiance of all precedent, caught a score of fine trout, almost within reach of the tips of our rods. The fish did not seem, in their eagerness to catch the flies, to mind our presence any more than if we were so many logs, or bumps on logs.

The episode of the deer and the Indian, on the day of our arrival, had filled us with a desire to have the

VERT & VENISON

chance the Indian had had, with a view to more successful results. I was particularly anxious to see how a deer looked through the sights of a rifle, never having observed one under those circumstances. We had with us one of those lethal devices known as a headlight, and we were not above using it. The flies were very bad in the woods, and every night the deer were down among the lily pads, cooling their slim legs in the water, and enjoying a pleasant siesta. It is a simple matter for a man with a headlight, and with no respect for the higher rules of the sportsman's code, to get into very close relations with the "dappled fools," while they are in or near the water. It is rather a weird business, paddling for deer in this way, and very tiresome withal; for you must keep perfectly still, and cannot stretch your legs and give a good hearty yawn as you are continually tempted to do. There is, of course, no light, except that which comes from the cyclopean eye of the inanimate bull perched over your left eye. With this circle of light you carefully sweep every foot of the shore line, while the canoe slips silently through the water and the lantern burns your forehead.

The first time we went out George embarked with an Indian, while Charles and I took our chances together, he courteously giving me the rifle and lamp. We paddled clear to the outlet without seeing or hearing a thing. But as we got near the creek we heard a great splashing ahead. We worked cautiously forward, throwing the light all around, but without seeing anything, though the noise con-

A Leaf from a Fly-Book

tinued. When we reached the outlet we found that the deer—there were two or three of them—were in the creek and hidden from our light by a bend. They were only a few rods off, and we could hear them walking about in the water, stamping and blowing, and making merry. Charles gently swung the canoe around, headed it straight into the creek, and let the current carry it. I was all ready to open fire as soon as we should pass the bend, and it began to look blue for the deer, when the canoe ran bump! into a sunken log. The next thing we heard was a skurry of hoof-beats, mingled with the sound of a word which rhymes with ham.

A few days after this deer hunt we pulled up our tent pegs, tied our baggage up in the pack-straps, and took again the long tramp over the trail and the sandy "right-of-way." With the memory of a happy outing green within me, I vowed that each succeeding summer of my life should find me in the woods. So far the vow has been broken but once. May the future record keep as good.

A Trip to the North Shore

THERE were six in the party, not counting the guide, who indeed soon proved himself to be "no 'count." It matters not where we were from or by what names we were known. We were all members in good standing of the Ancient Order of United Outers, and enthusiastic on the subject of trout. There were an artist, a mechanical engineer, a musician, a Cornell undergraduate, a New Yorker (distinguishing title) and a counselor-at-law, the unworthy scribe of the expedition. In addition to these there was the person alleged by the enthusiast who procured him for us, to be a guide and cook, well versed in the mysteries of woodcraft and frying-pan, and a great worker withal. A brief experience proved him to be neither, and with one accord we dubbed him the "Great Original Nuisance."

Our first plan, when discussing our summer vacation, had been to go to Vermilion Lake, in northern Minnesota, but learning that there were no trout in that region and being eager in the quest of *salmo fontinalis*, we decided to try the Brûlé River, a stream emptying into Lake Superior on its north shore, about sixteen miles east of Grand Marais.

Our selection of this place was the result of much deliberation over signs which, to the initiated, looked favorable. It was in a trout country. We could find but one man who had been near there, and he was so

A Trip to the North Shore

guarded in his statements, that we were impressed with the idea that there was more untold. Vague rumors of bear and other game also reached us. It was the bear that brought the Artist around. He was rather loath at first to give up the scenery at Vermilion, but having promised several bear skins to his friends, he could not afford to take any chances. Bear he must have, and he accordingly armed himself with a shotgun and some three hundred shells.

The Musician and myself were the photographers of the party, each having a small camera and a desire to "take" everything. The Artist affected to look down on this branch of the service as being basely mechanical and entirely outside the realm of true art. These cameras proved a very happy addition to the outfit, and afforded us occupation and amusement on many a day when nothing would bite but the black flies and mosquitoes.

We left Duluth in the evening on the steamer *R. G. Stewart*, reaching Grand Marais the next morning. So far as a few frame houses and a string of fishermen's shanties represented civilization, we left it behind us at this point.

The run from Grand Marais to the mouth of the Brûlé was thoroughly delightful. The lake was like glass, the air cool and bracing, and we were in a state of expectant exhilaration which enabled us to enjoy it to the utmost. About nine o'clock we sighted the break in the outline of the woods which marked the course of the Brûlé. As we had but one boat of our own, a light cedar canoe, our heavy baggage was

VERT & VENISON

loaded into the steamer's boat, and the canoe impressed into the passenger service. The Engineer took her bow, I crawled into the stern and the Artist sat on the floor boards amidships. In this helpless position we piled bags and bundles upon him until he was nearly out of sight, shoved off from the steamer's side, and sinking our paddles to the round in the clear water, started for the shore. Our craft was most cruelly overloaded, and with even a light swell we might have fared badly. No mishap, however, occurred, and we soon ran the nose of the canoe into the mouth of the river which we had come five hundred miles to see. There it was before us, an actual verity, and in appearance not a whit below our expectations. It was no insignificant brook, but a lordly river, dashing out between tall cliffs in a foaming cascade, and spreading out in a broad stretch of quiet water at the mouth.

Getting the canoe into the river, heavily loaded as she was, proved to be no easy matter. The beach all along this part of Lake Superior is composed of gravel which the waves pile in high banks, in some places completely damming the mouths of the smaller streams, so that the water can be seen trickling out through the bank of gravel. The Brûlé, however, was too strong to be treated in this way, but its actual outlet had been reduced to a space about a rod in width, through which the water rushed like a mill-race. After several failures and by dint of much pushing, paddling and shouting, we forced the canoe through this rapid and into the quiet water inside.

A Trip to the North Shore

I wonder now how we ever did it. Tying the canoe to a clump of alders, we climbed the bank and sat down. We were in the wilderness at last.

[In the summer of 1924, thirty-seven years after this expedition and the writing of this article, returning from a trip on the Nipigon River, I went from Port Arthur to Duluth in a high-powered automobile bus. And running at forty miles an hour along a smooth highway within a short distance of the mouth of the Brûlé, I saw the pebbly beach of Lake Superior where we made our camp of long ago. Truly time has made wondrous changes.]

The next thing was to select a place for the tents. Certain premonitory symptoms of mosquitoes and black flies induced us to camp on the beach at the edge of the woods and about eighty rods from the river. Everything had, of course, been landed on the wrong side of the mouth, and had to be transported across or around that narrow chute of swift water. And here the "Nuisance" developed a skill and fertility of resource that roused in our breasts the hopes which were so effectually blighted by his subsequent shortcomings. No one but a man of most unusual strength could stand for a moment in the current at the mouth—a subsequent and most unfortunate experiment convinced me of this; yet that fellow carried the boys across on his shoulders, one by one, and then brought over most of the baggage. But it was a ticklish matter for the passengers.

The shore here was a succession of low, rocky points, with long smooth beaches between them, each

VERT & VENISON

one set on a curve that was the line of beauty itself. There was no dirt and but little sand. It was all solid rock and clean, bright pebbles. We selected a spot at the edge of the woods near one of these points, about twenty yards from the water, and began work. In a short time we had the tents up and a fire started. Our *impedimenta* was strewed about in a confusion that was more picturesque than convenient. We all knew that it ought to be stowed away at once, and the camp made shipshape; but as soon as the tents were fairly up, each man began furtively to get out his fishing tackle, trying the while, in a sneaking sort of way, to look as though he were doing something for the common good. As fast as each got ready he struck out for the river. I was one of the deserters, and why not? Had we not hired a servant to work for us? Had I not waited a year for this opportunity? Had I not fingered over my tackle every Sunday morning during the past winter and, in fancy, caught the mammoth trout which now lay at the tail of the rapid by the cliff waiting for my fly? Now I was to meet him on his own water and carry him captive to camp. There, in an offhand, nonchalant way, I would remark to the "Nuisance" that the trout were larger in the Michigamme and Musquagumagum.

These things I thought of while walking down the beach to the river, anointing myself the while with the mixture of tar and sweet oil, so happily offensive to the mosquito. It was well for me that I had my fun in advance.

A Trip to the North Shore

My fly fishing is confined to a few weeks in each summer when the fishing is the poorest, so that my skill is nothing to cause comment, at least not favorable comment. But there must be something of the true angling instinct in my make-up, for whenever I throw a fly at a rising trout—I would fare better if I threw a rock at him—I experience the “peculiar thrill” with which the works of enthusiasts have made the public so familiar. But thrills do not count for much when you get back to camp.

I never could remember the names of artificial flies. My learning on this subject is embraced in one practical rule, *viz.*: If they will not take brown flies, try in succession a grasshopper, a worm, and a trout-eye. If they resist these beguilers, pick your creel full of raspberries, so that the boys will not chaff you when you get back to camp.

I began fishing at the first rapid and fished industriously for about an hour. I went through all the motions and assumed all the attitudes known to the expert; but the trout were not moved by my efforts or, perhaps, they were moved farther—they would not bite. Once in a while one would rise and play around in an exasperating way, and then quit. Finally one took the fly. I did not stop to “play” him or “give him the butt.” I simply yanked him in without benefit of clergy, deposited him in the creel, and listened to his rhythmical flopping with savage satisfaction. He was the only reward of my efforts. Soon after catching him the black flies took hold of me, and they attracted my attention as soon as they

VERT & VENISON

did so. I had considered myself familiar with all the forms of pestiferous insect-life that haunt the woods, but these North Shore black flies were a new thing. When one bites it produces not a common boil, but a distinct and terrifying abscess. He does not bite and run, either, but drills a hole, fills it with poison, and then starts another. They are very industrious, observing neither Sunday nor the eight-hour law. After a little gentle dalliance with these fellows, I gave it up and went back to camp, leaned my rod against the slant of the shanty tent, lay down on the sand and swapped lies with the "Nuisance," who was making bread in the baker. The other boys soon came in, having had but little better success. We tried the Brûlé many times afterwards, but this day's experience was a fair sample of our luck.

By the time it grew dark we had our tents floored with a thick layer of balsam boughs, the blankets spread, and were quite ready to occupy them. We had four tents, two of the "shanty" pattern, entirely open in front, and two "A" tents, one for the "Nuisance" and one for a storehouse and dining-room. Our fire was on the sand in front of the shanties, which were close together, opening toward the lake. We were all tired and soon turned in, not to sleep but to meditate and be comfortable.

In honor of the Engineer's baby—"the finest boy, sir, that ever wore hair"—we called our resting-place Camp Stanley. Our days there, after the first, were a good deal on the same pattern—taking photographs, hunting agates on the beach, fishing, explor-

A Trip to the North Shore

ing the trails through the woods, and, in general, doing nothing useful and nothing ornamental. The Musician and myself built a "dark-room" back of the camp. It was a most grewsome and funereal-looking tent of black cloth, three feet wide, four feet high, and as many long. There we kept our developers, our "hypo," and the various essences used in the photographic black art. As the tent was not dark enough to work in in the daytime, we were compelled to work at night.

We used to wash our negatives in the lake. One who has never washed a negative in Lake Superior at night when the waves are running, so that you have to chase down the beach and reach out for the water as the wave recedes, being careful all the time not to get sand on the film, and not knowing just where the water is, anyway, does not know what that pastime implies.

First and last we photographed nearly everything in the camp and about it. No Indian ever passed in the daylight without having the drop-shutter sprung on him. One day a party of three stopped in front of the camp. They were in a Mackinac boat, and towing astern was a birch canoe of most beautiful proportions. One of the Indians was a picturesque-looking old fellow, and the artist was anxious to sketch him. At first the crafty sagamore was shy, evidently suspecting that the artist had designs on a pre-Raphaelite checked shirt which partially concealed the upper part of his frame. Finally his suspicions were allayed, and he came ashore and sat for his portrait.

VERT & VENISON

The fishing in the Brûlé continued poor, and we cast about for some other stream. The map showed the Flute Reed River about six miles east of us, and one morning the Engineer, the Artist and myself took the canoe and went in search of it. We found it without difficulty, but it proved to be almost dry. The Engineer and I clambered along the bed for about a quarter of a mile, he with rod and I with camera, until we reached a fall. There was a good deal more water here, and at the base of the fall was a most enticing pool. As soon as the Engineer began to fish he took out a good-sized trout. That started me, and I straightway laid down the camera, cut a birch sapling, borrowed some line and went at it. We took about fifteen trout out of that pool, and lusty ones they were. The sensation of catching trout at all after our many disappointments was so overpowering that it drove us nearly daft. Our story created quite a stir in camp, and an expedition the next day by the others was equally successful.

West of Camp Stanley, distant five or six miles, were two small streams, and investigation proved that the trout were fairly plentiful in each. One was known as Kimball's Creek; the name of the other does not look well in print. At the mouth of Kimball's there was a log house, tenantless and in excellent repair. We decided to move camp to this place for the remainder of our stay. A party of Indians with two Mackinac boats were returning to Grand Marais from a berrying trip, and we chattered with them to move us. For a consideration which they

A Trip to the North Shore

expressed as "nish waubeck" (two dollars) they undertook the job. We struck the tents, piled everything into the boats, and the Engineer, the Artist and the "Nuisance" embarked in the canoe. The rest of us were to walk; at least that was the plan at the start. The first mile changed our opinion of the matter most thoroughly. Walking over those loose pebbles was the most exasperatingly tiresome work a man could undertake, and we repented the experiment and envied the boys in the canoe. Just then one of the Mackinacs ran ashore to hoist sail, and we embraced the opportunity and scrambled aboard.

I remember nothing on the whole trip more thoroughly enjoyable than that morning's sail to our new camping ground. The boat was loaded flush with her gunwales with the Indians' "duffle" and our own. There was just enough wind to make the sail draw, and that was all we wanted. We were close to shore, and it was a slow-moving panorama of curving beaches and pine-covered rocky headlands all the way. The Musician stretched himself out on a pile of bedding, lighted his inevitable cigarette and watched the shore. I sat between a couple of little Indian boys and tried to

* * * learn their language,
Learn their names and all their secrets.

We did not make much progress on either side, but had great sport on both. They were about six and seven years old, and were sturdy little warriors. The ease with which they could handle a ten-foot oar made me think the race was not degenerating so very

VERT & VENISON

fast. My attempts to talk Chippewa convulsed them, and they cracked no end of jokes at my expense.

We reached "Scott's Place," as the cabin on Kimball's Creek was called, about noon, and at once took possession, stowed away our baggage and put things in order. The Musician and myself straightway converted the loft into a photographic studio, and voted it a decided improvement over the tent. Among the other things in the house we found a "papoose board," which we used for a developing table. Many a blank-looking dry plate was transformed into a negative on that Indian cradle.

We had pretty fair luck with the trout, though most of us were too lazy to fish. The Musician distinguished himself from the common herd by catching a two-pound trout, the best fish caught on the trip. The water in these streams was much colder than in the Brûlé and the trout correspondingly gamy.

The days slipped away rapidly enough, and one afternoon the Engineer and I ran the canoe out through the long swells and put the Musician on board the *Stewart*. That was the first break in the party, and we all felt lonesome. Things went rather haltingly about camp after his departure, and we were ready to go, when, a few days later, we built a signal fire on the beach and watched the steamer turn in from her course to pick us up.

August, 1887.

The Sentimental Side of Wading

THE stickler for accurate etymology will probably at once claim that it is an abuse of the President's English and of the canons of propriety, to connect the lofty and poetical idea expressed by the word "sentiment," with one so suggestive of all that is unpleasant, as is the word "wade." For, having acquired his knowledge of its meaning between the covers of the dictionary, he has there learned that an erudite lexicographer, after deep thought upon the subject, has assigned to it this meaning:

To walk in a substance that yields to the feet, to move sinking at each step, as in water, mud, sand, etc. Hence, to move with difficulty or labor, to proceed slowly among objects or circumstances that constantly hinder or embarrass.

What a host of disagreeable thoughts this definition conjures up! It suggests motion, it is true, but of the slowest kind, the spiritless plodding of dumb misery, in which aching muscles drag one weary foot after another, "sinking at each step, as in water, mud, sand, etc." How can there possibly be even a redeeming feature in a process which is defined in such lugubrious terms, to say nothing of its having a sentimental side?

But while the words which describe the pleasures of life are all in the dictionary, they are not there so arranged as to make the description one of absorbing

VERT & VENISON

interest to the casual reader. And thus it is that one whose knowledge of wading is based upon this scholastic definition, has surely missed that rich store of information which awaits him who, with a fly rod for a key, opens that great library of Nature, wherein he finds "books in the running brooks." In that library he finds a dictionary whose leaves are green, and whose information is given in those plain and simple words "which gods and men may trust." And in it he will find a definition of the verb "to wade" which reads something like this:

To walk slowly in a clear stream, to watch the sky, the trees, the wind and water, and to so time the deft casting of a fly, that, to the lurking trout, it will but seem in tune with all of these.

But this is not a discourse on etymology, and an ancient writer has truly said that "definitions are dangerous." Let me, therefore, avoid unsafe ground, take to the water, and tell of a summer day's wading which had in it a happy leaven of sentiment.

The *locus in quo* of this episode was on the southern shore of that wonderful inland sea which the wise All-Father, deeming it too great a blessing to be possessed by one nation alone, has set as the fountain-head of the watery boundary between our country and her northern neighbor. Few spots there are upon that shore where the angler cannot, with certainty of good returns, unroll his blankets and drive his tent pegs. And of all these spots, none more lavishly repays the labor of a visit than the mouth of a river, y-clept the Salmon Trout. From a

The Sentimental Side of Wading

camp at that center of the Happy Fishing Grounds sallied forth the party whose movements have impressed me with the connection between sentiment and wading.

Doubtless the *personnel* of this party had much to do with the wealth of sentiment with which its woodland wading was invested. And yet I hesitate at anything in the nature of more specific description. For it is unnecessary to state that its dominant, inspiring, all-pervading exhilarating element was a bevy of damsels, whose feminine charm was but slightly alloyed by a mingling of the baser sex. To attempt an individual description of these nymphs, would not only be difficult—from my own mere inadequacy—but, because of this inadequacy, might involve me in trouble hereafter, should these lines meet their eyes. It is safer to deal in generalities, which, in this case, if used with aptness, cannot but be glittering.

Into the minds and hearts of these city-bred girls there had entered that mysterious spirit of the woods which must be a heritage from the primal man. "All the forest's life" was in them, "All its mystery and magic." They were, by natural instinct, keenly alive to the witchery of the woods, and, by reading and discourse with men, had learned the difference between the angler and the mere catcher of fish, and the marked distinction between the fly rod and the fish pole. They had learned to regard the deft handling of leader and fly as something within the realm of fine art, and the craft of the tier of flies as rivaling that of the milliner. But all this knowledge was as

VERT & VENISON

yet scholastic and untried. The months which had preceded their summer outing had been devoted to the wild, delirious joys of preparation, and in that happy period they had collected such a store of angling gear as the fallen sons of men rarely hope—dare I say care?—to possess. This was the first real opportunity they had had to “flesh their maiden swords,” and upon this day, at its opening, they looked as one whose history could properly be written only in rubrics.

Now it will be noted by those “Whose judgment clear can others teach the course to steer,” that here were gathered together those elements and materials which would surround the most prosaic and commonplace affair with a halo of romance and sentiment. And if wading a stream had no attractive feature, it still could not fail to be a joyous journey to one whose good fortune allowed him to make it in this company. Let me hasten to say that this good fortune had not fallen to my lot because of my just deserts. But, having arrived at that stage and age of dignity where one hath “given hostages to fortune,” my presence was permitted as a sort of tribute to propriety.

It is well known to those who go down to the stream in boots, that the first requisite of success is an appeased appetite and a full stomach withal. For, aside from the matter of mere creature comfort, this tends to maintain that separation in the mind of the idea of trout as game and as an article of diet, which is, at least theoretically, essential. One in whom the ardor of fishing can completely allay the pangs of

The Sentimental Side of Wading

hunger, may rest assured that the artistic element predominates in his disposition.

By some strange mischance this expedition had been outfitted in that happy, care-free method, by which each man assumes that, if his tackle and blankets are adequate for his personal requirements, the Lord and the ravens can be relied upon to care for the common weal. In consequence, when the camp was built and its outfit displayed, it was noticeable that the provisions and cooking utensils varied inversely as the square of the fishing tackle. The first meal reduced us almost to our shoe-pacs, and the breakfast next morning was of that thin and theoretical kind, which is provocative either of riot and dissension, or mirth and the good fellowship of a common misery, according to the dispositions of the victims. But, as has been truly said, by them of olden time, "Better is a dinner of canned peaches and coffee, where love is, etc."

It was with enthusiasm as undiminished as their appetites that the start was made. When I say "the start was made," I do not mean these words to convey the impression of an immediate and united movement toward the fishing grounds. On the contrary, they accord more nearly with the fact, if they suggest a sort of neutral zone of hurried and tumultuous preparation, slowly resolving itself into such semblance of order as is found in a straggling band whose advance is interrupted by returns and searches for missing tackle, and by attempts to make three hat-pins do the duty usually performed by four.

VERT & VENISON

In this fashion we followed the "tote road," which crawls from the mouth of the river southward, toward a lumber camp at its headwaters. About two miles up, where one of the many windings of the stream brings its waters near to the road, we executed a flank movement to the river bank. Here we unlimbered, in final preparation for a direct and personal assault upon the trout in their native element. And here was I treated to a rare surprise, to which my astonishment at the spirited enthusiasm which these girls maintained in spite of their so-called breakfast, was as nothing. I had begun vaguely to wonder whether they really understood that wading meant actually getting into the stream and "sloshing around" knee-deep in the water, and had many misgivings as to whether their performance would equal the intentions with which they started. These base and baseless doubts were promptly dispelled, when a lissome damsel, shod in kid slippers—whose breadth of sole was utterly inadequate as a support in the soft places of the river bed—stepped gaily into the water, and began to flail the landscape with a fly rod worth a knight's ransom. The rest followed suit, and it was at once my happy fortune to realize that wet and bedraggled skirts—ordinarily suggestive of anything but the beautiful—can be so occupied and so aptly fitted in with the occasion, as to bring to the mind of the most captious censor no thought but of wonder at the misconception under which he had so long labored. And I further learned that the "unsnagging" of a set of flies from roots and overhanging

The Sentimental Side of Wading

branches—a process which usually impairs one's hopes of Paradise—can be done under such circumstances as to make it almost an attractive pastime.

I suppose these gentle disciples of the gentle art had visions of a triumphant return to camp, with all the glory of full creels. But there is a tradition among the craftsmen, that the noble *salmo fontinalis* must be deftly lured from his hiding place. And it is, therefore, not a surprising fact that the day's angling produced no results which changed the character of the evening meal. For we moved down the highway of that noble stream, in the sunshine of a glorious day, like "an army with banners," laughing, shouting, thrashing the water and driving dull care, and the trout, to the uttermost parts of the earth. But did this failure to secure what are, by the unthinking herd, regarded as the angler's rewards, dim the ardor of these amateur fly-casters, or dull the keen edge of their interest? Far from it. To them the water was still clear, the sky cloudless, the trees green, and the breeze that moved all in unison still fresh and invigorating. And so, in that summer day's fishing, they garnered those rewards of which the angler is always sure, which will rise to the fly in every pool, and with which the magic of memory can always fill the emptiest of creels.

Is there sentiment in wading? Has the learned lexicographer included all its elements in his definition? Let him go into the woods and write an *addenda* and *errata* to his book.

August, 1897.

The Song of the Merry Woodsmen

We're *coureurs du bois*, which means the rangers of the
wood:

We hunt the buck—we get him too—our marks-
manship is good:

We follow tracks and carry packs, our work is always
play,

Dull Care has got to hurry fast to catch us on our
way.

Our home is in the greenwood sweet beneath the
birch and pine,

By Mountain Lake, on Ida's slopes, they're yours
and they are mine:

And when at eve we seek our rest in log hut or in
tent,

Whate'er our luck the balsam couch assures us true
content.

The tale of years to some might make our youth
seem far away:

We know they're wrong, we scout their fears, their
doubts we cast away:

For where the Hunter's Moon gleams bright through
birch and pine o' nights,

We know that boyhood comes again with all its fresh
delights.

The Song of the Merry Woodsmen

So don't you think 'tis fine to be a ranger of the wood:
Whose aim is true because his eye and spirits both
are good;

Whose pack seems light because his heart is always
light and gay,

Who finds in chill November all the blithesome joy
of May?

Red-Letter Days with the Deer

I DO not know the origin of the expression "red-letter days" nor whether it really implies that certain days are rubricated on the pages of memory like some of those delightful old vellum books over which the monks used to work with the pen of Nature's providing in the exercise of an art which was truly "scriptural." The old fellows who made the rubrics certainly had no "red-letter days," as we understand the expression. Theirs were days of quiet monotony passed apart from the world—

Where storied windows, richly dight,
Let in a dim, religious light;

and which were marked by a round of duties from lauds to matins and from matins to lauds. Perhaps they colored a little more brightly the initials of the songs for festival days, but they could not give the color of the page to the day itself, nor find in the dull round of monastic routine the counterpart of those glowing days which come to the Disciple of the Out of Doors. For to those who "hear the call, good hunting all," the Red Gods bring now and then days the color of whose illuminations is never fading.

These days are not always—and most happily is this so—those which, tested by the weight of creel or game bag, are most successful. But there are many who know and assert that the successful sportsman is not alone he who at the end of the day can show

Red-Letter Days with the Deer

fur, feather or fin. And I am the more anxious to support this doctrine, as without it I cannot hope to be classed with the successful hunters. But it does sometimes happen that success in its most material form attends the efforts of the hunter whose game bag is habitually as light as his heart. It is of such a day that I write.

The time was in the open season of November, when the deer hunter can say, "Here is no law in good green shaw," and can carry a rifle with a clear conscience. The place is immaterial, though it is perhaps proper to say that the broad expanse of Lake Superior, all blue and white like a Delft tile, lay only a few hundred yards to the north of the cabin where we spent the hours between dark and dawn. The day—from a still hunter's standpoint—left everything to be desired. There was no snow, the woods were dry so that everything crackled under foot and against the sides of your legs and heralded your progress like that of an army. And there was the wind: not a steady, straight-blowing breeze whose course you could note and make it an aid in your lethal purpose; but a lusty, gusty tempest, which came and went from all quarters at once and whirled around in such varying courses, that if a deer was to avoid scenting you, he would have to be very lively about it, and spend most his time running in a circle.

I had been out at daybreak and hunted industriously along an old logging road which ran—or would you say lumbered—through the woods along the

VERT & VENISON

course of a small inland lake. It was a fine place for deer, was that road, and the deer knew it as well as we did. It went straight into the heart of the forest, was far enough from the lake shore to leave good cover between it and the water, was wholly deserted, and scattered along it were numerous small choppings abounding in grass and "browse." To the north of it in the mile stretch to Lake Superior was good ranging ground, a true forest according to the definition which dear old John Manwood wrote in 1615 in his *Forest Lawes*.

A Forest is a certain Territorie of wooddy grounds and fruitfull pastures, priviledged for wild beasts and foules of Forest, Chase and Warren, to rest and abide in, in the safe protection of the King, for his princely delight and pleasure, which Territorie of ground so priviledged, is meered and bounded with unremoveable markes, meeres and boundaries either knowen by matter of record or by prescription; And also replenished by wilde beasts of venerie or chase, and with great coverts of Vert for the succour of the said wilde beasts to have their abode in.

Into this "Territorie of wooddy ground" I entered with a stealthy step and a 38-55 Winchester, when the tree tops were beginning to brighten with that pervading suggestion of light which is seen only at dawn. When the sun was throwing his long javelins of light between the trunks of the Norways I emerged at the other end, without having seen anything but a glimpse of a flashing white tail,

Like the snowfall on the river
A moment white—then melts forever.

Probably some mighty still hunter will say, "If the woods were noisy you ought to have sat on a log

Red-Letter Days with the Deer

and watched." Well, I have done that in my time, and—but that is another story.

So I went back to breakfast. This sounds like a commonplace statement of a very ordinary event, and suggests the idea of pork and potatoes served from a rusty frying pan and accompanied by that mess of hell-broth which the lumberjack has been schooled to regard as coffee. But the fact was far otherwise. Our breakfasts and dinners were cooked by one who understood all the niceties of that noble art, and they appealed and ministered to the higher and better parts of our nature.

It was our custom—and I commend it to others—to hunt from dawn until about nine o'clock; then return for breakfast, and after a slight interval of profitable idleness, take to the woods again and hunt until dark, dining late in the evening. By this method we economized time when the hunting was best and took our meals in ease and comfort.

In pursuance of this custom I started off in the middle of the morning intending to scout around some likely ground lying east of the camp, find a good place and watch during the latter part of the day. The wind was still of the eccentric and concentric character which I have described, and the time of day, the impossibility of moving quietly and all the circumstances were so unfavorable that I had very little idea of seeing a deer, much less of getting a shot, though feeling pretty sure that several would probably see and hear me. So I proceeded somewhat carelessly. (*Nota bene:* Never proceed somewhat

VERT & VENISON

carelessly; act as if you knew he was there all the time.) A mile or so of walking or strolling brought me to the end of a wide open space, which fronted on the big lake. On the south side of this was a jack-pine thicket with an old road leading into it. Partly to get out of the wind and into the shelter of the jack pines, I took this road, which, as it left the clearing, went up the side of a short ridge. As I started up the slope it occurred to me that the hunting rules laid down by Mr. Van Dyke required that I should crawl up to the top and peek over the ridge and not stalk up like a grenadier on a forlorn hope. I was about to follow this course when a beautiful pair of horns seemed suddenly to grow out of the top of the ridge. They remained there motionless, with nothing else showing, and looking very much as if they were stuck in the sand. I realized that the buck and I were in about the same physical and mental situation: He could see enough of my cap to wonder what on earth it was, and I could see enough of his horns to make me wish he would raise his head about two inches. But he would not do it, and fearing that he would jump into the jack pines before I could "rush" him, I did a very foolish thing. The top of the ridge seemed to be pine needles and light stuff through which a ball would pass without serious deflection, so I figured that there was a chance of shooting through it and taking him at the base of the horns. Well, I tried it. The pine needles flew in the air, the horns disappeared, and when I reached the ridge, which required only about three jumps, the

Red-Letter Days with the Deer

buck was at the latter end of a beautiful leap which took him out of sight. Then I sat down and berated myself soundly for my carelessness, and vowed always to hunt, as the Spaniards say, "with beard on shoulder."

After waiting for things to quiet down a bit I started ahead, keeping that preternaturally sharp lookout which comes with the freshness of a good resolution. The road dipped down into a sort of amphitheater with a steep hill on the opposite side, covered with thick second growth. A suspicious appearance in a maple thicket near the top of the hill made me stop, and I soon made out the outline of a doe's head and shoulders. The situation did not require any tangent firing and I dropped her in her tracks the first shot.

This revived my spirits, which had been a good deal depressed by the incident of the horns on the ridge. I slid the doe down the hill to the roadway, where the team could reach her, and pushed on with fresh energy and an increased confidence in my ability to encompass the death of any deer who would give me half a chance. I started for the place where I had seen the buck's tail patterned against the underbrush, hoping for a chance to line the ivory sight upon some portion of his framework, instead of shooting by calculation at a place where he wasn't.

A few steps brought me through the jack pines to a large plain which had been burned over about a year before, and there under a tree a couple of hundred yards away stood the biggest buck I expect to see

VERT & VENISON

this side of the Happy Hunting Grounds. Of course all the bucks you see alone are big fellows, but this was really one of Nature's noblemen. He stood up like the traditional buck on an old powder flask, or like one of Landseer's stags. He was watching me in a stolid sort of fashion, not seeming half as interested as I was, but I realized that he was not a permanent fixture in the landscape and that it behooved me to act quickly. So I drew for his shoulder and cut loose. He gave a sort of lurch, whirled and jumped behind some fallen tree tops, reappeared on the other side, headed for the sheltering jack pines and going like a torpedo boat. I pumped in another shot without apparent effect, and he was soon out of sight.

The ground where he stood was covered with ashes and, finding no blood, I could not tell whether he was wounded or not. It was useless to follow him, so I went back out of sight and waited the better part of an hour and then started to circle around the edge of the plain. Before long I jumped him in some poplars, and then into a brief minute were crowded all the emotions and experiences which I had imagined since I read *Deerslayer* as a boy. The exact order of events is not clear in my mind even now. I know only that he started like a whirlwind; that I had him down at the second shot; that he got up and I knocked him over four times, each shot on the jump; that when it was over and his antlers were on the ground I uncovered,

Took with forehead bare
The benediction of the air,

Red-Letter Days with the Deer

and rejoiced aloud. For had I not killed a masterful buck, and killed him on the run?

Truly that day was one to be marked in rubrics.

As I sit by my fireplace on this day in February I can see the buck's head hanging on the wall. But I can also see the jack-pine thicket and hear the wind from off Superior roaring in the tree tops.

Another day well worthy of the place which it holds in memory, may be called a red letter-day, although its dominant color was white. We were in the same belt of woodland, and had been hunting about ten days. Rarely indeed do the fallen sons of Adam receive the blessing of such weather as we enjoyed on that trip. The temperature was just right. Not the

Dull, hard bitterness of cold,
That checked mid-vein the quickened race
Of life-blood in the sharpened face;

but the keen-edged air which keys a man up to the full enjoyment of all that it brings to him. And over all was the glory of the snow. It fell every night; and each morning when we stepped out in the quiet starlight, the tracks of yesterday were obliterated, and we knew that every trace and track we saw was only a few hours old. To one whose skill in woodcraft is not equal to following the trail of a serpent on a rock it brings a great and abiding sense of comfort to know, when he finds a track, that it is not prehistoric. We had made good use of the advantage thus given us and had a respectable show of bucks and does hanging up in that outstretched attitude which

VERT & VENISON

a deer exhibits when hung up by the gambrel joints. This gave us a placid feeling of contentment; for we knew that our stay-at-home friends could not rail at us as unskillful hunters, nor the envious critic assert that we had exceeded the limits of fair sport. And with this feeling we began to range the woods in rather a careless fashion, by the strict code of the still hunter, keeping together that we might enjoy together our love of the woods, whose beauty was changing and increasing with each new fall of snow. Our enjoyment was the keener that it was our first experience with heavy snow in the deep woods.

As the end of our stay drew near there was about ten inches of snow on the ground, and to be sure of getting the full enjoyment of it, we decided to leave the snug cabin where we were housed and spend our last night in the woods. There was underlying this plan a sort of pretense that by camping near a famous runway some three miles from the cabin we would have a better chance of securing a mighty buck. But we both understood that the real purpose was the fun of building the camp, and I think that a buck,—unless perhaps he was a “stag of ten—” could have walked past our fire with impunity.

We rolled up our blankets and a small assortment of provisions and utensils which I venture to think would not have provoked a derisive sniff from old Nessmuck himself. For shelter we took the fly of my Protean tent. (Those who do not know the Protean tent, made by a genius in Evanston, Illinois, have lost much of the joy which this life holds for the

Red-Letter Days with the Deer

initiated.) With the assistance of a tall Swede, whose courtesy was severely strained in keeping back the explosive expression of his opinion of our plan, we transported the outfit to the selected spot, and set to work making a local habitation.

The spot which we had chosen was specially adapted to the purposes of a small camp; indeed, the silent forces of Nature had evidently been working for ages with a view to that final consummation. It was in a wide, high valley which ran along between the shore of a lake and the shoulder of a hill which would have been a mountain if it had been large enough. A trail led through the valley from the lake to a rocky spur which was well called by the descriptive name of "The Fortress." From there it went onward to yet other regions of delight. Crisscrossing the trail about a mile from the lake was a little runlet not large enough to brawl noisily over its stones, but just large enough to make a sort of subdued *sus-surus*, which was clearly for the exclusive benefit of the man who slept with his ear to the ground.

A little to one side of this rill was an outcropping of rock, one side of which was straight and about four feet high—a ready-made back for a woodland fire-place. Opposite this and at a distance nicely calculated to be within proper range of the firing line, we cleared away the snow to make a place for the tent. This tent was a small affair, seven feet square on the ground, open toward the fire and tapering up from three sides to the top of the single pole which supported it. With the snow banked up around the

VERT & VENISON

bottom it blended with the general white of the landscape so that it seemed a portion of it, and not an outpost of civilization.

The setting of the tent was a small matter and soon accomplished, but the building of the fire was one of more serious moment, involving not only the use of axe and muscle, but a nice and judicious discrimination in the choice of wood and the arrangement of logs. For this was to be not a little "friendship fire," nor yet a conical pile of sticks, like that over which an Indian cowers, receiving that subtle aroma which gives to the gentle red man one of his most noticeable characteristics. We planned a white man's fire, a noble array of logs piled with that spendthrift prodigality impossible except in the forest; one which would last throughout the night, and in the cold gray of the dawn still glow and radiate a genial warmth. So with the help of our friendly Swede we cut down a stately birch and a couple of hemlocks, the latter yielding both fuel and bedding.

The first blow of the axe gave me a new experience. The steady snowfall of the past week had covered the trees, and as there had been very little wind, every branch drooped with its accumulated burden. An axe stroke on the trunk of a tree whose limbs are waiting a chance to dislodge their covering of snow produces an immediate result quite surprising until you have tried it. When you have tried it once you do not try it again; you stand discreetly on one side and throw sticks at the lower branches until they are cleared. Then you sneak up and hit the

Red-Letter Days with the Deer

trunk a good lusty thwack with the axe, and stand quickly from under. After that you can chop in comfort.

The fire was an artistic creation, in the building of which was much joy. We laid a couple of stout birch logs on the ground with their ends against the rock; across these we piled other logs,

The knotty forestick laid apart,
And filled between with curious art,

until we had a substantial structure containing enough wood to build a farm house of modest proportions.

With the hemlock boughs we covered the floor of the tent, making a fine springy couch of generous thickness, and with the head scientifically arranged at the proper height to enable you to lie in bed and watch the fire. For that is one of the highest forms of bliss to which poor weak humanity attains. If you do not enjoy lying under a blanket and watching a fire through the opening of the tent flaps, it is either because you lack experience and are therefore ignorant, or because your nature is base and sordid. If the former is the reason, there is hope for you; if the latter, there is none; you are of the mud—muddy.

When the substantial part of the home building was completed, we made a sort of pretense of watching the runway for deer. But we both appreciated,—though perhaps neither would have acknowledged it, that it was a mere pretense, and that it would have been a real disappointment to wound a buck and have to trail him far from our comfortable camp. So we

VERT & VENISON

both returned at about the same time, each pretending that he had come back to start supper, in order that the other might be free to hunt.

The birch logs, though covered with snow, took kindly to the idea of fire, and when "by punctual eve the stars were lit," our log pile was crackling and sputtering in a most cheery and companionable fashion.

Our supper was, in its materials and construction, one of extreme simplicity; it did not begin with caviar and end with *creme de menthe*; but let those who think they can surpass it try—and fail. In a kettle, whose size was nicely adjusted to the requirements of two competent appetites, we prepared a mixture of venison, pork, potatoes and onions, justly proportioned so that each should give the essential part of its better nature to the creation of a noble result. This sacred vessel we placed between the ends of two logs in the fireplace, where the strong, clear, clean heat of hardwood coals would strike it, and begin that transmuting process in which the camp kettle of the forester is so much more successful than the alembic of the alchemist. With this savor rising from our plates we sat by the fire and watched the shadows of the night steal out from among the trees and silently invest our camp. And if you know of anything more beautiful than the oncoming of night in the woods, I wish you would share the knowledge with me; for I would go far to see it.

The bed proved all that a sleeper or a sleepless man could wish; and sleeping and lying awake were

Red-Letter Days with the Deer

equally pleasant. The only trouble about sleeping was that it benumbed one's faculties so that he lost something of that keen enjoyment of the time and the place. I remember getting up about two o'clock to replenish the fire which had burned down to a glowing mass of coals whose rosy radiance was reflected on the snowy tree tops above the tent. The sky was of that dark steely blue like the color of a rifle barrel, and the stars gave just the kind of light which was most fitting.

As the white stars shine
On the dark Norway pine.

I stood by the fire for a while, enjoying the night, and then crept back into the tent, hoping not to disturb the Counselor. But that matchless forest comrade was wide awake, and with full appreciation queried:

"Isn't it great?"

And it was.

Mountain Lake

Burnt Mountain holds its southern shore,
The north old Huron's crest;
Grim Homer guards it on the east,
Mount Ida on the west.

An Unsalted Luncheon

THERE are other things beside doubtful stories which should be taken with a grain of salt—as witness these presents.

The oftener a man goes into the woods the fewer things he takes with him. So constant is this change in ratio that no doubt, if his days in the woodland which the Lord giveth him were long enough, his outfit on the final trip would be even snugger than that which Kipling described:

The uniform 'e wore
Was nothing much before,
And rather less than 'arf o' that be'ind.
For a piece o' twisty rag
And a goatskin water bag
Was all the field equipment 'e could find.

Most men who, in a spirit of beneficence toward their fellows, give, from the hoarded store of their experience, advice on this subject, feel it their duty to impress upon the tenderfoot that his pleasures afield will vary inversely as the square of his provision list. Some of these gentlemen, in giving advice, go to extremes which indicate great frugality in the use of common sense. Some of them, I suspect, would oppose the carrying of prunes because of the added weight of the useless stones. How they must have welcomed the advent of smokeless powder!

Now I am not writing an article on "How to be Happy Though Camping" nor a treatise on "The

An Unsalted Luncheon

Lighter the Pack, the Lighter the Heart"; nor do I presume to give advice as to what ye shall eat or wherewithal ye shall be clothed. But from a bitter—because tasteless—experience I venture to suggest that if you have at all times a few pinches of salt in your pocket, you will greatly increase your chances of that happiness which the woodland ever holds in such ample store for those who seek it there. You can discard, or forget, many things, and from Nature's warehouse supply their place with something which is either better, or so much worse that it distracts your attention from the loss. But you cannot procure salt, unless, indeed, you distill the tears you shed for having forgotten it; and that, of course, takes time. *Hinc illae lachrimae.*

We were camped on the south shore of Lake Superior, in the latter part of November, duly accredited by the State of Michigan with licenses authorizing—but not always enabling—us to slay a stated number of deer. The other part of the pronoun "we" stands for an eminent Counselor-at-Law of whom it might truly be said—

In camp and court he bore
The trophies of a conqueror,

—and not in dreams either, like the Turk.

We had parted in the morning to hunt separately in a belt of woodland, and meet, unless the necessities of the chase prevented, at a small lake where we designed to eat a frugal sandwich. The day was dark and lowering, the counterpart of many which had

VERT & VENISON

preceded it. In fact it was a week since we had seen the sun, and every day had brought its rainstorm. So often had this been repeated that, if our spirits had not been waterproof, they surely would have been dampened. But some one has said,—probably Christopher North in the “Noctes”—that “there is no such thing as bad weather.” And truly he is right about it, though you have to be out of doors and away from the pavements to appreciate it. Also must you have good foot gear, good legs, and a watertight spirit withal. Having these requisites we had spent an enjoyable week in the woods despite the rain, though daily we had prayed to Diana to send us the snow which was still withheld.

Shortly after we parted I heard the Counselor's rifle—he was ever a lucky dog. And soon luck came my way also. I was standing in a little open glade when a big doe, whose footfalls the wet moss had deadened, jumped the brush and landed in the clearing behind me. I turned at the sound and got in four shots while she was making some of those spectacular leaps with which a frightened deer creates space in the rear. It did not take long to trail and find her, for a 38-55 hollow-pointed ball is a difficult thing to carry, and I soon had my rifle against a tree and my hunting knife out.

My appointment with the Counselor was several hours off in time, but only a couple of miles in space, and, having killed my deer, I had nothing to do but kill time. So I set about doing an artistic piece of woodland butchering.

An Unsalted Luncheon

Now to “gralloch” a deer—the technical word of the old huntsmen is much nicer than any modern equivalent—is a task which has few elements of inherent pleasure; in fact it will be almost repulsive unless you regard it as a legitimate toil of the chase. If you separate the work of capture from the pleasure of pursuit, and regard it only as a matter of blood and entrails, you had better trade your rifle for a shotgun and hunt clay pigeons.

To clean a deer you must hang him up. I hasten to qualify this didactic statement by taking it back; it is not necessary to hang him up, if your purpose is merely to separate his “in’ards” from his “out’ards” in the shortest possible time and then go after another one, or get back to camp to tell about it. You can, in that case, simply rip him open as he lies on the ground, pull out his *viscera*, and get the blood all over his tawny hide, so that he looks as if he had been killed in a railway accident. But if you regard him as game and not meat, and hold him entitled to respectful treatment, you will proceed as if to a sacrificial ceremony, and hang him up.

And now note that there are two ends to a deer, and that you are to choose between them in hanging him up. The ordinary method is that of the butcher with the sheep, which consists of running a “gamstick” through the gambrel joints between the bone and the big tendon and suspending him head down by a rope tied to the stick and flung over a branch. This will suffice, and is indeed the better way, *after the deer has become meat*; but while he is still game,

VERT & VENISON

and *your* game, you should, in the transforming process, hang him up by the head. The reasons for this are purely practical and tend toward that cleanliness which enables you to approximate godliness. When he is hung up stern first the ribs act like a basket, which securely holds—being built for that purpose—all that you desire to remove. But if you hang him up by the head, this rib basket is upside down, and thus gently empties its contents on the ground as soon as your keen-edged knife gives the necessary assistance.

It seems as if hanging up a deer would mean simply throwing a rope over a limb, tying it to his horns—or around the neck if a doe—and then hauling on the rope until he is “chock-a-block.” But you cannot do it alone unless you are very much stronger than the ordinary sportsman, and it requires a heavier rope than you can conveniently carry—unless you take a small block. But you can always do it with a tripod of stout poles about ten feet long. You tie the ends together with the light rope which you carry around your waist, spread the ends of the legs out equally, and lift up the center until the tripod will stand. It ought to do this at a height of between three and four feet, though you may have to get the ends of the legs against something, or “jab” them in the dirt to make them hold while they are at so small an angle with the ground. Then you take a bight of the rope around the deer’s neck—or horns—and shove the legs—the tripod’s, not the deer’s—alternately toward the center until the frame stands at a sufficient height to swing your game clear of the ground.

An Unsalted Luncheon

By this method I hung up the doe, cleaned her, and buried the discarded portions in order that they might not offend the woodland air. But I saved the kidneys, for it occurred to me that, instead of our usual cold sandwich, we might as well build a fire and have a hot luncheon. And certainly those kidneys would suggest to anyone the idea of eating and of doing it quickly. Never have I seen a more luscious looking morsel, encased as they were in a delicate white tissue—"sweetly oleaginous, oh, call it not fat!" as Charles Lamb said of the prosaic pig.

While wrapping this addition to our luncheon in leaves I heard three quick shots from the Counselor's rifle, and knew by the sound that he was shooting the small charges in his 30-caliber. When I met him, an hour later, he made the greatest show of reticence I have ever witnessed. When I hailed him with the usual "What luck?" he replied, "Did you hear my three shots? That was at a partridge, and I never touched it."

"Well," I said, "how about the other shot?" "Oh," said this wily stoic, "Did you hear that, too?" And then his reticence gave way. "It was a whaling big buck, and I dropped him in his tracks!" Then we foregathered.

On our way around the end of the lake to our luncheon place I shot a rabbit with the 22-caliber target pistol which I carry to shoot partridges. (I will kill a partridge with that pistol yet, if I, and the partridges live long enough.) This gave us not only an abundance, but a choice of meat for our noonday

VERT & VENISON

meal. Usually we were not very hungry at noon, and limited ourselves to a sandwich and a piece of chocolate. But the doe's kidneys had aroused all our carnivorous instincts, and we were like cave men.

We built a fire, flattened the top of a log for a combination seat and table, and spread thereon our provender. The table did not groan, even when completely set; for it showed

- 2 Doe's kidneys,
- 2 Rabbit legs,
- 2 Bacon sandwiches,
- 2 Sticks of chocolate,
- 2 Russet apples.

This abundant display was flanked by two rubber cups filled with water, cold enough to chill harrow teeth.

When the fire had burned down to a good bed of coals we skewered the kidneys and the rabbit's legs on hardwood switches and set about cooking them. And then there was borne in upon us the full force of the fact that we had no salt. We made an ineffective attempt to supply its savor by fastening the paltry strips of bacon from the sandwiches on the meat as it cooked, but with doubts which were justified by the event. The abundant fat encircling the kidneys enabled us to keep both them and the rabbit legs nicely basted. The fire was just right and the cooking beautiful, as a mere visual spectacle. The rabbit legs browned nicely, with little jets of imprisoned steam bursting out in a most appetizing way. The kidneys accepted the ministrations of the

An Unsalted Luncheon

fire and transformed themselves from mere organs into a viand worthy of those who know what it is to kill and to cook in the open.

When they had reached this point of absolute perfection we bore them to our log table, and learned the difference between appearance and reality, or rather between appearance and taste. The kidneys were not merely tasteless,—better if they had been. I do not know how to describe them; but if there is any word or expression for the opposite of “salty,” it is the one I need. And to sharpen our sorrow we could see that salt alone was needed to give them that perfection which we had anticipated. The rabbit legs were about as bad, though, being of a courser texture, the lack of salt did not, as it were, create such an active and persistent absence of taste. Still they were bad enough to cope successfully with anything in their line.

And so in the end, after all our exalted anticipations, we dined upon sandwiches bereft of their bacon, chocolate, and russet apples, gnarled and weazened by long life and the privations of a remote youth.

The Counselor and I now each carry on all occasions a small box containing a teaspoonful of salt, artfully compounded with red pepper. If the Fates can catch us in that trap again, they will be entitled to their quarry.

*The Homing Thoughts of a Wandering
Coureur du Bois*

When soft September with its haze
The summer landscape fills,
It 'minds me of a lake whose shores
Are girt with wooded hills.

When crisp October paints the hills,
To show the path it came,
I know its frosty touch has set
Mount Ida's top aflame.

And when November's keener air
Has turned the forest gray,
I think of trails where hoof-prints mark
The snow at break of day.

Rome boasts that every road to her
The traveler will take;
But those on which my fancies rove
All lead to Mountain Lake.

The beacons which the sailor guide,
Where ocean's surges break,
Are blazes on the trail that leads
Me back to Mountain Lake.

Rotterdam—Sept. 8, 1912.

One of the Trails

We know the packstrap's tightened pull,
When trails are steep and packs are full;
And by the camp-fire's glinting light
Have spread our blankets for the night
On fragrant boughs of balsam.

THIS trail began at the west end of Rush Lake about five o'clock on a September afternoon. It ran across the short strip of beach, through the narrow opening between the alders which overhung the water; then along a level bit of fern-covered ground; then up a slight incline which made us lean a little under our packs; down into a glade surrounded by tall elms whose branches roofed it in with groined arches of greenery; up a hill, winding among boulders, and finally down through a birch thicket until it slipped under the thin edge of the water of Howe Lake and disappeared in the crinkled sand. It reached this point about an hour later, and we arrived at the same time, with packstraps pulling hard at unaccustomed muscles.

The end of the trail was not a bad place for a small camp such as ours would necessarily be; but, as usual, other places signaled to us with the allurements which distance renders so effective. In response we turned off to the south and walked along the shore toward a small point which, jutting into the lake, hid its outlet from view. Beyond this point there was a strip of beach covered with an array of

VERT & VENISON

cobblestones through which the water trickled back into the forest on its way to Rush Lake. Crossing this stony path and wading the shallow creek, we dropped our packs on the edge of the sand and prepared to camp.

Selecting a camp site is always interesting. Sometimes the interest is to be found only in retrospect and is wholly obliterated during the act itself by the exasperation of a great hurry. And much innocent printer's ink has been shed in describing how to do it and in cataloguing the points of the ideal camp site, so that it may be recognized by the sons of men, even when the light is fading and the axe mislaid. But enough has not been said on the subject of camping in the sand; for its insidious attractions still beguile men to their undoing, even when the warning voice of experience reminds them of former woes.

To begin with, you are saved the trouble of clearing a place and grubbing up the roots which do you despite in "the wee sma' hours ayont the twal." It is usually dry and always clean. Its surface is readily adaptable to your wishes and to the points and hollows of your sacred person; so that it seems for a short and golden interval to be a substance evolved by Nature for the support of reclining bodies. And in these particulars of the domestic economy of camp life it is not so bad as things which are worse. But when you begin to get the culinary department into active service, and to spread around in apparently convenient places the food which is intended to make the inner man come out of his hiding place and

One of the Trails

rejoice aloud, then it is that the sand, which seemed so useful and so kindly disposed withal, shows the subtile malignity of its nature. For every shift of the wind, every movement of the firewood, every step of the cook serves as an excuse for it to arise and embed itself firmly in your food. And when you have partaken of a meal in which sand has become an active ingredient, you thank the Lord for making the enamel of your teeth so hard, but wish he had made it a little thicker.

It was in such a place that we made our first camp, and before we left it the next morning we entertained decided views on the subject of sanded bacon and eggs. But, to look back upon, it presents itself as a very pleasant camp. All my camps do, for that matter; no cloud of rain or mosquitoes can quite obscure their better features. They always seem to have been what I thought they were going to be.

Our little shanty tent was backed up under a cedar, and opened out toward the sunset across the lake. The fire was directly in front and of a size nicely adapted to the season, so as to take off something of the keen edge which the air soon gets, without affecting its exhilarating and tonic quality. And the stars were deftly placed, so that when the daylight faded we could see them from under the tent and without yielding anything of our blanketed luxury.

The plan was to go from this lake through the woods to Anne and Mountain lakes, which lay among the hills to the south. And in the morning we

VERT & VENISON

indulged ourselves by packing lazily and leisurely for the trip. Here again the sand rose up against us as an active element of discomfort. It filtered into all the remote fastnesses of our bedding and made itself a familiar presence in the contents of our larder. For when you spread your sleeping bag out on the level sand and pack your belongings in it preparatory to making yourself a beast of burden, you may indeed shake the dust of that place from your feet, but you cannot rid yourself of the clinging presence of the sand.

The trail started off from the lake in a fairly legible style; but shortly—after the manner of trails—vanished either into the ground or into thin air, we could not be quite sure which. Being unable to follow it farther, in either event, we laid our course by the compass, and struck out up the hill. I must say that the compass that morning seemed to possess a vacillating disposition and to be uncertain whether it would better point east by north or south southwest, with variations. Perhaps this uncertain disposition—or our uncertainty of its disposition—was to some extent caused by the inherent contrariness of a pack. For a pack is a thing which does not readily lend itself to the control and domination of the casual tramper. The trouble does not arise merely from its weight. When it is lying on the ground, and you try to lift its clumsy bulk with your hands, it does indeed seem a very weighty affair, and you are prone to wonder whether you can carry it at all. But when once you get it placed where the weight is distributed along

One of the Trails

your back and shoulders, the sensation of mere weight is so much lessened that you feel quite equal to it. This feeling of slight exhilaration, however, soon disappears, being lost in an increasing consciousness that the pack has ceased indeed to be a mere inert mass of dead weight, and has become a very active force in the production of varied and recurrent discomforts. Its action is not negative but positive, and it is not content merely to lie upon your back and be carried. The passive voice is unknown to it. You are no longer master of your footsteps, but must pick and choose in obedience to the insistence of its imperious commands. And you soon learn that these commands, though not shouted from the tree tops are yet brought to your notice in a definite category with which a few transgressions make you painfully familiar. Thus you will note that it is not well to climb upon a log which lies across your way and jump down on the other side. For in the ascent you have to lift the weight of the pack an unnecessary distance and at great disadvantage, and in the descent it jars you cruelly. Your wisest course—if you do not go around the log—is to straddle gently across it, using great care withal, lest by turning too much sideways the pack “slews” on your back, dragging you down to the ignominy of a fall, or wrenching some of those back muscles of whose existence you are becoming painfully conscious.

I do not wish to seem pessimistic on the subject of packing, and most surely not to imply that you should not try it. For the pleasures whose attain-

VERT & VENISON

ment renders it necessary are well worth the price. But the pleasure of the expedition does not consist in the packing, but exists in spite of it. And perhaps it may cheer up the consideration of a depressing subject to recall what was said about it by the man whose love for tramping in the out-of-doors made him regard attendant discomforts as the lawful tribute due by fealty to a kindly overlord, to be paid with thankful recognition of that which is conferred in return. Stevenson says in his essay on "Walking Tours:"

During the first day or two of any tour there are moments of bitterness when the traveler feels more than coldly toward his knapsack, when he is half in a mind to throw it bodily over the hedge, and, like Christian, on a similar occasion, "give three leaps and go on singing." And yet it soon acquires a property of easiness. It becomes magnetic; the spirit of the journey enters into it. And no sooner have you passed the straps over your shoulder than the lees of sleep are cleared from you; you pull yourself together with a shake and fall at once into your stride.

I do not dispute these inspiriting statements. I like to think them true. But there is a vast difference between the light knapsack which suffices for a pleasant jaunt along smooth roads with cosy hosteleries at convenient intervals, and the pack of him who goes a-forest and sleeps at "The Inn of the Silver Moon." And you will recall that when Stevenson "put up in God's green caravanserei" he took a donkey along as burden-bearer.

In the meantime we were struggling up the hill in a "kittering" direction so as to skirt the end of the mountain and reach Anne Lake at its western corner.

One of the Trails

We soon fell in with a broad logging road which led directly down to the lake at the bottom of a clean little bay with rocks on one side, and on the other a steep hill with ranks of pine and hemlock marching up its slope. Here we rested and took a smoke. (You are to bear in mind that when a pack is placed on the ground and you lean up against its bulk, it seems wonderfully conformable to the configuration and requirements of the human anatomy.) Then we followed the trail into the strip of woodland which lies between the mountain and the lake.

The north shore of Anne Lake turns abruptly near its western end, making a sort of elbow joint. The main body of the lake lies nearly east and west, and the eastern end is separated from Mountain Lake by only a couple of hundred yards. North of the lake rises the long ridge of Huron Mountain, from which you may see on one side many, many miles of the blue water of Lake Superior, and on the other many, many miles of billowy tree tops. Between Anne Lake and the mountain is a fine belt of woodland in whose depths are well-worn runways which the deer have not yet ceased to travel.

Our course took us into this greenwood, skirting the bend in the shore line until we came to a spot nicely adapted for a resting place. It—or rather they who sojourned there—had a pleasant view up and down the lake, an easy slope down to the shore where a log was conveniently placed for the drawer of water. And for the hewer of wood there was material and opportunity all about, both wood for the fire

VERT & VENISON

and boughs for fresh-made beds whereon no man had ever slept.

We busied ourselves pitching camp, prolonging each small detail of the work so as to extract from it all the pleasure which such work can furnish so abundantly to the interested performer. And among other things we made a most noble fireplace, though simple withal, being only the usual two logs laid about a foot apart, with a glowing bed of hardwood coals their entire length. Across these were placed green maple sticks at short intervals, thus transforming it into a complete and most effective grill. Upon its bars we laid a delicately modulated series of mutton chops, from whose sizzling sides there presently arose a fragrance which I am sure made Pan and his fauns and satyrs talk of it for many a day.

The next morning—for this was a trip of one-night camps—we packed up and tramped through the woods to the eastern end of the lake; crossed the outlet—getting completely turned around in the dense alders while doing so—and then turned south through the stretch of heavy timber which lies between the western shore of Mountain Lake and the eastern slope of Mount Ida. Through this we walked somewhat less than a couple of miles to a place where an old logging road furnished a ready-made clearing for a camp.

It had been arranged that a boat should be sent to this point to ferry us to the northern landing of Mountain Lake; for a spur of Huron Mountain runs so sharply down to the water as to render that part

One of the Trails

of the shore practically impassable—at least for laden pack animals like ourselves. As we were thus expecting visitors, we departed from the stern simplicity of our first camps to the extent of making a table with seats. It was a marvelously simple affair, with just enough difference in height between the table and the bench to enable the observer to tell which was which. But in use we abolished the distinction between which and which; for we found that by sitting on the table and putting our plates on the bench we could reach over it to the fire and thus serve ourselves direct from the source of supply. It does not sound, when thus clumsily described, as if it would work; but it did and most surprisingly. But I do not take the responsibility of recommending the plan to others, or of giving any advice upon the subject. I am merely recording events—not writing an article on “Hints for Hunters,” or “Tables for Tenters.” But I am able to testify that the combination worked equally well two years latter, when I spent a night at the same place with my sons. And such is the force in memory of the association of place and circumstance, that when I slacked my packstrap on the second visit, there came at once to my mind the remembrance of the wonderful johnnycake which crowned with golden success our cooking for the supper of the first camp in this spot.

The night which followed the making of this camp was really the end of our tramp. For when we yielded our packs to the ferriage of the boat the next day we felt that we had lost our independence and

VERT & VENISON

had become mere picknickers. And if one were to philosophize upon the train of thought which this suggests, he might observe how easy it is for a man to carry with him that which renders him independent; for though the pack may sometimes seem heavy, yet a light heart will counterbalance it.

The Cabin on the Bay

The huntin' season's comin' on,
I feel the old pulse stir,
I see the leaves a-flutterin' down,
I hear the partridge whirr:
I see the buck's track in the snow,
An' straight my fancies stray
To where the hills look down upon
A cabin on a bay.

Oh! its huntin' up the Mink Run Road,
An' peerin' all around,
An' seein' every thing that moves,
An' hearin' every sound:
An' trailin' where Mount Ida's top
Salutes the comin' day,
An' trudgin' back at nightfall to
The cabin on the bay.

The crooked runway's windin' line
Invites my willin' feet,
'Twas made by those who never knew
The trammels of a street:
By woods an' hills an' lakes an' rills
It leads its steadfast way,
An' those who foot it know full well
The cabin on the bay.

VERT & VENISON

Oh! its huntin' up the Cliff Lake trail,
An' seein' every track,
An' throwin' up your rifle quick,
An' hearin' it go crack:
An' cuttin' poles to hang him up,
The only proper way—
An' tellin' all about it
In the cabin on the bay.

What though the city's noisy streets
Confine our steps today,
'Tis not for long, an' soon we'll see
The cabin on the bay.

October, 1910.

On Seeing Things in the Woods

TO those who wander in the forest, whether on hunting bent, as idle loiterers, or for the mere companionship of the trees, it is a common experience to see game most unexpectedly. And they often learn, from "subsequently discovered evidence," that some animal lurked unseen so near their pathway that it seems impossible to have overlooked it. You move along with hasty noisy step and a partridge springs from beside you with a confusing whirr which makes you gasp. That he heard and saw you long before you were near him is evident, as is also the fact that he made no attempt to escape until you were almost upon him, and that it was his escape which revealed his presence. Knowing that he may have companions you stop and carefully look over the ground all about you; decide that he was a lone bird and start on; whereupon the covey begin to get up from the most conspicuous places which you have conned so searchingly. You see a thicket of gray maple saplings; it is a likely place for deer and you look it over, and look, not merely at but through it; for the hillside beyond makes a good background. Seeing nothing, you pass on around it, to find from the tracks in the snow that a deer stood there watching you, and stole quietly away as soon as he *saw* that your eye was withdrawn, or that a convenient tree trunk intervened.

VERT & VENISON

From many experiences, running through all the gradations, you learn—but not in a realizing sense until your experiences have been many—certain general rules. *Item:* That the game knows when you see it and when you do not, and that, unless his nose affrights his heart, he will probably keep still until he knows that you see him. *Item:* That whatever moves within the range of vision is instantly revealed; and therefore that the game—or yourself—though in plain sight will usually escape identification from the surrounding *camouflage*, if a frozen rigidity is maintained.

And having learned some of these rules of the game you will also learn that the game often refuses to observe the rules; and that the very intentness of your concentrated vision will sometimes conspire with the hopefulness of your imagination and play upon you more sad tricks than Robin Goodfellow ever invented. As witness the incidents of this tale.

On this particular day the Doctor and I were alone in camp. The Counselor had gone down to Pine River and from there to the railroad station,—fifteen miles by wood and water—to attach himself to the end of a wire some four hundred miles long, over which he hoped to receive the welcome news that a threatening case would not come up in court until the hunting season was over. The Milesian who, for the hewing of wood and the drawing of water, was called our “guide,” had gone with him to perform the offices of packer in the fortunate event of his return; and this left us in complete possession of

On Seeing Things in the Woods

the cabin, the woods, the hills and the silence which hung over all. The silence may truly be mentioned as an additional and separate entity; for the snow was falling, and this, for some unexplainable reason, always seems to give an affirmative quality to the silence of the forest.

It was hardly an ideal day for hunting, as the deer would not be moving, and the big flakes soon blotted out any track. We started out, however, on our separate ways, the Doctor scouting around in the heavy timber along the hillsides west of the camp, and I swinging along southward on the Buck's Crossing road, turning off from that on the Swamp Road and down into the lower ground toward the lake. Up to this time I had seen no track which seemed, in the heavy snowfall, sufficiently modern to make it interesting. But here I found across the road the furrows which a walking deer makes in deep soft snow. There were a pair of them, and the tracks showed that crystalline sharpness which always indicates a very recent passage. A buck and doe had evidently passed just before I came in sight and had gone unfrightened into the cedar thicket which bordered the road. While studying the situation to determine how to deal with it, I caught sight of the Doctor, and enjoyed for a few moments the pleasure which it always gave me to watch him when he was alone in the woods unconscious of any observer. He was ever a notable figure at any time or in any place—six feet two above his soles, and with his head in the air like the top of a Norway pine. When you saw him

VERT & VENISON

in a crowded city street his long steady stride suggested so strongly the rhythmic swing of a marching column that it seemed as if he were at the head of a phalanx which the very loiterers on the street formed behind him in recognition of his natural leadership. But in the woods the traits of his Indian ancestry came strongly out. His step was slow, cautious and wary; he was alert and watchful, and you would have thought that nothing could escape his instant observation. This tale has to do with his own opinion of the sharpness of his woodland vision.

I gave him our quiet hunting call—the notes of the white-throated sparrow, if you know what that is, and if you do not I am sorry for you—and he came silently down to where the tracks led into the cedars. I indicated to him that I would go ahead and watch the track, and that he was to keep at my heels and look for the deer, ready at sight to shoot over my head. The woods were so thick and the snowfall so heavy that this seemed to be the best method of approach, especially as the wind was right, and the feathery snow made the walking noiseless. So we proceeded in this way, I devoting all my attention to the sinuosities of the tracks, which doubled and wound about as only a wandering deer can do, and the Doctor towering above my shoulder, peering on all sides to catch sight of the deer at some of their turns. Pretty soon I saw the buck, and stopped, expecting to hear the instant report of the Doctor's rifle. Nothing happened, and looking up at him I saw to my great surprise that while he realized why

On Seeing Things in the Woods

I had stopped and was peering intently ahead he did not see the deer. I pointed out the round pattern of the buck's stern—all that was visible—under a snow-covered hemlock; but still he did not see it until the buck obligingly gave a little wiggle to his tail. Then he fired and to the amazement of both of us scored a clean miss. The buck gave a mighty spring, the Doctor gave a mightier one, fired again at a vision of waving horns; and then the Great Silence settled down on the forest—and we settled down on a snow-covered log to smoke and explain things. After giving utterance to some expressions of that definite, terse and explosive character appropriate to the occasion, the Doctor turned despairingly to me and said: "I shall never hope to have your instant accuracy of sight for things in the woods." This remark we remembered, and roared over later in the day.

Having the whole day before us and nothing better to do than to follow the deer, we sat on the log and smoked for about half an hour to let them get over their fright before starting after them. They evidently had not seen us, and probably could not locate with any accuracy the place from which all that astonishing burst of noise had proceeded. It often happens that the echoing of a rifle shot in the woods confuses a deer, so that when he does not see or wind the hunter, he cannot decide which way to run in order to seek safety; and in the delay of decision recovers from his panic and moves off slowly. We figured that this would happen, and so, after a decent

VERT & VENISON

interval for rest and vituperation over the luck, we took up the track, the Doctor keeping at my heels as before, watching for the game, while I, like a hound in leash, followed the windings of the track.

Hunting in company like this is clearly a violation of the principles of the art of still hunting; for two men make four times as much noise as one. Yet we do it frequently for the pure joy of companionship in a forest wandering, and especially for the pleasure of having an appreciative gallery when the chase is successfully ended.

The track at first showed a series of long leaps, ploughing up the soft snow where the bunched hoofs struck together. The deer had gone at a slapping pace for about an eighth of a mile, stopped to look back, and seeing nothing of a following enemy fell into a steady walk, which took them, still at a good gait, up the long hillside toward the northwest. Following them we soon came out into open hardwood and hemlock, and through this we proceeded with great caution, watching ahead and on all sides to see if they had tried that common, but very exasperating, trick of doubling back on the trail. On the rocky hillside the timber was very close, small hemlocks, spruces and pines, all heavily weighted with snow so that it was impossible to see more than a few rods. The wind was right, and the soft snow made our walking noiseless; and as the track showed that encouraging freshness which keeps the hunter on the keen edge of expectation, we were looking for a shot at any moment. Finally we climbed with great care

On Seeing Things in the Woods

up a steep bank, the top of which overlooked a wide open valley. As we reached the top the Doctor looking across the edge of the snow, whispered: "There they are!" I flattened out in the snow to give him free shooting space, but he said: "We are not going to lose them after all this work. You shoot." Rather flattered at this I raised on my elbows, looked over into the valley and saw the deer walking slowly among the trees about a hundred and fifty yards away. I drew for the buck's shoulder, and cut loose, but evidently made a poor shot. For while we found a small bunch of hair, there was no blood on the snow and the deer went off in such a lively way that we soon gave up the chase and started up over the mountain—around which the track had led us—toward camp. My failure put the Doctor in better humor, and as we walked along we discussed the general subject of seeing game, and the variety of reasons which the ingenuity of hunters invents to justify, or at least excuse, poor shooting.

At the top of the mountain we sat down to rest, selecting for this purpose a log at the top of a small cliff, from the base of which an old-time chopping stretched out across to the edge of the green timber which ran down the steep side to the shore of Mountain Lake. Here we continued our discussion. The Doctor descanted at length upon the remarkable resemblance between deer and the various objects in the landscape, at last remarking: "I don't so much object to a deer making himself look like a stump, but I don't think a stump has any right to

VERT & VENISON

look like a deer." I—being somewhat set up by his remark earlier in the day about my powers of observation—maintained that there is a subtle something which enables the trained eye of the hunter to distinguish between animate and inanimate objects in the forest. Having delivered myself of this somewhat didactic opinion I happened to look across the clearing and saw a deer lying down at the far edge. I pointed it out to the Doctor, who at once got ready to shoot; for it evidently was his turn and his chance. (He afterwards said: "It looked just like a bronze deer on a paperweight.")

He rested his elbow on his knee, threw his whole soul into a steady aim and fired. The deer moved slightly but did not get up, and the Doctor fired two more shots. We could see a sort of quiver, and I thought the deer had been killed and could not even make an attempt to get up. But the Doctor was skeptical, and said I had better shoot "to make sure." So I fired, and not seeing much change in the face of Nature, fired my remaining three shots in rapid succession. At the last shot the deer toppled over flat in the snow.

We clambered down over the side of the cliff, and took up the line toward our game. The Doctor noticing that I had not loaded my rifle inquired if I was not going to do so; to which I replied, "What's the use; I have filled my license."—a remark which he never allowed me to forget.

As we approached the scene of this woodland tragedy we found the snow ploughed up with the

On Seeing Things in the Woods

converging marks of our bullets; but the body of the deer was not readily discernible. In fact we could not see it at all. But as we were gazing around in a sort of stupid amazement, my eye fell upon something, and a great light broke upon me. I seized the Doctor's arm and pointed to our "deer." There it lay, a small log with a bunch of oak sprouts near one end, two large leaves for ears, a dry dead branch for horns, and the marks of my last bullet which had tipped them over. Well, we simply fell down in the snow, rolling over and over in inextinguishable laughter. When we sat up I asked, "Do you think you will ever attain my instant accuracy of sight for things in the woods?" And he inquired, "Did you notice the subtle something which always distinguishes animate from inanimate objects?" And we rolled over and howled again.

The Counselor had returned to camp and heard the great volley of shots which accompanied this "Mountain Meadow Massacre." He met us at the cabin door upon our return and eagerly inquired the particulars of the great killing which must have resulted from so much shooting. We told him the whole story, and the log walls of the cabin bulged with our united laughter.

Those who read this tale without merely laughing—as we did—at its ridiculous conclusion will see in it some of the strange manifestations of self deception in the woods. Two men, with a goodly store of hunting experience, and with many pleasant hunting trails behind them, were concentrating all their

VERT & VENISON

powers of observation in looking for deer. One failed to see a deer plainly visible and while looking directly at it and for it. The other saw a deer where none existed, and so impressed upon his companion the reality of his vision that both emptied their rifles at it, and did not discover what had happened until they had strolled over to skin their game. Thus fact may vie with fiction, and fiction with fact, and either be successful. And this shows what joy there is in the hunter's life.

Mink Run

Between Mount Ida and the hills
That watch her sunset side,
It starts—a trickling rivulet
Which ferns and grasses hide.

A twisting valley guides its way,
And all along its course
The old time lumbermen have spent
Their ineffective force.

For though they scarred its wooded slopes,
And left them barren then,
The woodland Goddess waved her wand
And made them green again.

The rotting bridges all attest
Her power to efface,
The towering trunks of birch and elm
Her purpose to replace.

The deer and beaver know it still,
And haunt their native place,
Our vagrant fancies join them there,
In memories of the chase.

November, 1914.

*A Letter from British Columbia**

Snowshoe Pass, B. C.

Sept. 12, 1916.

I don't know when—or whether—you will get this letter; but it is a good time to write, or at least there is time to write. For it is snowing and blowing hard so there is no use going out to hunt. We intended to lie around camp anyway today and rest our legs after somewhat strenuous use of them in the last two days and the weather has helped this resolution, though every little while the sun would come out beautifully and tempt us to try the hills near camp. Now I am sitting in the tent against my rolled-up sleeping bag writing on my map case.

We left Shorty's cabin on the Fraser River Friday morning, Sept. 8th, with three men and six pack horses, making a train of eleven horses. The trail is a trapping line which Shorty and Tom had cut for their winter's trapping a couple of years ago and we are the first outsiders who have been over it. This of course makes it all the more interesting to us, for it always gives added zest to know that you are "the first white hunter" in a country. We followed up Horse Creek until about two o'clock, through heavy spruce forest and over a very rough trail, though not very steep except in one place. Our first camp was in a grassy opening where there was feed for the horses.

*This letter was written in camp, from day to day, to my eldest son, who was then with the troops on the Mexican border.

A Letter from British Columbia

It was near the river and Shorty and Tom, who are enterprising fellows, rigged up some tackle and caught some trout for breakfast.

Saturday morning we were all packed up and in the saddle by 7:30. The trail still followed up Horse Creek and all along it we could see the "sets" where they had been trapping last winter, until we came to the first cabin on their "trapping line," a snug little place, with a door made from a single slab hewn out of a big log. Finally we got to where the stream, or the branch which we were following, was quite small and after crossing and recrossing several times we came suddenly out of the woods into the bottom of a wide valley with towering snow-covered peaks on all sides and a grand glacier up against the sky at the end, with twelve waterfalls pouring out of it and forming Horse Creek, "head waters" in the truest sense of the term. Another stream came roaring down through the woods from Snowshoe Pass, and up this we climbed, leading the horses along a "switchback" or zigzag trail, literally dug out in the hillside and built up with tree trunks to keep it from falling down hill. We were pretty well winded when we reached the high valley which forms Snowshoe Pass, and overjoyed to have the sun come out bright and warm, for the location of our camp is certainly very beautiful. We stretched out on the grass to rest our legs, which were fairly stiff from the climb and the saddle, and while we were lying there I saw a big white goat high up on the rocks on our side. We watched him with the glasses while the men unsaddled and got supper

VERT & VENISON

and then I tried to get near enough for a shot. He started off for the high cliffs and I tried a foolishly long shot at him, which only made him go a little faster; so I left him, hoping that he would stay in our valley until the next day.

Well, he stayed in our valley, and I could see his white coat away up on the cliffs when I came out of the tent next morning. That side of the valley was a mountain with precipitous cliffs, at the base of which was the regular "talus" of what is most appropriately called "slide rock." This slide rock is itself about 700 or 800 feet high, running—you can hardly call it standing—at such a sharp angle that it requires a good deal of work to negotiate it. The goat was at the top of this, feeding quietly along, and apparently not frightened, although in plain sight of the camp. Of course we had to keep out of his sight, so Tom and I had to make a long detour, climb to the top of the slide and then sneak along from point to point. From below it looked like an easy piece of work, but the reality was very different. Some parts of it I did not like at all, particularly one place where I was in a narrow cleft and Tom had my rifle wedged across the opening for a hand rail. Finally we had to come out on the loose rock, where the goat heard us and of course started off at once. When we came in sight of him he was about 800 yards off and climbing the cliffs at a pace for which I had certainly set no precedent. There was no chance of getting nearer, so I sat down and began to shoot, while Tom watched with the glass. I saw one shot strike close behind

A Letter from British Columbia

him, but that was the total result. Tom said he saw "Sir William," as he called him, go down on his knees at the third shot, but I think that was a mere polite exaggeration, for the goat kept on going.

It was snowing and sleeting, so we went over to a little clump of balsams, lay down in the heather—the country is full of heather—out of the wind and made tea for our sandwich luncheon. Then we climbed the other side of the valley looking for caribou, or a possible grizzly, on the wide plateau.

Edgar went around the end of the mountain with Shorty, saw a bunch of goats, on the other side of the canyon—of course—took a long unsuccessful shot at them, and came back, like myself, wet and tired, and fully persuaded that goat hunting is decidedly strenuous business.

We stayed at Snowshoe Pass four nights, making side excursions looking for caribou, sometimes on foot and sometimes on horseback. Then we packed up and started along up the Pass over the divide to the waters which flow into Beaver Creek. Edgar and I went ahead of the pack train, and at the head of the Pass I struck a caribou track in the snow which had fallen the night before. This set us on edge; for a caribou certainly makes a track which is exciting to a novice, and this looked to me as large as a dinner plate. The track was all we saw, however, and in the afternoon we made our third camp in one of the most beautiful spots I ever saw—but still eating bacon. We were in a meadow with a balsam forest behind and a lake about the size of Trout Lake in front, and

VERT & VENISON

a glacier hanging overhead, with snowy peaks all about. This country is full of little ponds, all of the purest glacial water, clear as crystal, and beautiful beyond words. The water itself is blue when very deep, but most of the ponds are so shallow that you see the bottom, and they show the color of the rocks and moss.

From there we came to the fourth camp, at which I am now writing, reaching here on the afternoon of the 14th. Believe me it was a trip: down a zigzag trail through heavy forest, about 2500 feet to Caribou Creek, then up as high on the other side and along to its head waters, where we camped in a meadow, just below the head of the Pass over to Small River.

The next morning we started with the two guides up the Pass, a very stiff climb which pumped the heart out of us, so that we stopped frequently to rest. Shorty was walking ahead and I following close behind up the narrow ridge that was marked with the slender ribbon of a caribou trail. As we neared the top Shorty suddenly pointed and threw himself down on the heather. And there at the head of the Pass against the sky line was the most magnificent bull caribou I ever expect to see, standing and looking straight at us. What followed was a matter of a few seconds, but it was a great experience—for, mind you, this was the first caribou I had ever seen. In this rock-climbing country I don't carry my rifle loaded, so I had to pump in a shell and shoot with my heart going like a series of trip hammers. I took him square in the chest, and hit him again in the stern as

A Letter from British Columbia

he jumped through some balsams. The guides yelled, "Run up the hill as fast as you can!" This did not mean much for me, as all the running I could do would not amount to more than a gentle stroll, and I was satisfied that the caribou could not do any better. But I did my best, and at the top of the Pass found him lying in the heather, as dead as a cave man's grandfather. Well, perhaps I did not feel good—as did all the rest for that matter. For the whole experience, from the game to the scene and the scenery was all that could be desired, and just what I had often imagined—without ever thinking it would really happen.

Shorty and I cleaned and skinned the bull, laying the meat out on the nice clean rocks. We signaled to the cook in camp, and he came up and packed a load back, so when we returned in the evening we had roast caribou for dinner, and liver and bacon for breakfast the next morning. It is without doubt the most tender, delicious game meat I ever tasted, and we are reveling in it—with no lack of supply, for he weighed about 450 pounds.

Caribou hunting is great sport, for they live high up at timber line and above, and this enables you to camp in the most beautiful clumps of balsam with wide views of the mountains and over the plateaus on all sides. Nothing can be more intensely interesting than hunting in such a country, where you are always looking for game in a landscape which constantly appeals to your eye. But at this altitude—about 5000 to 6500 feet—your wind goes quick—

ly when you go up hill. Fortunately it returns as quickly, and the keen pure air is very exhilarating and keeps you on the move. You need good eyes as well as good legs, and your field glasses are a necessity as well as a great comfort. A caribou is a large animal, but he is a very small speck on one of these big hillsides and it is surprisingly easy to overlook one.

The day after I got my bull Edgar got a cow, mistaking it, as I did also, for a bull because of its horns.

One day we had a great hunt for goats. Small River starts from a huge glacier at the foot of Cathedral Mountain—as Edgar named it—and there were good goat pastures on the slides along its cliffs. We went over the Pass and down through a broad open country, past a series of five beautiful little lakes, and then up a steep slope over the shoulder of a mountain to an open hillside, from which we could see the mountain and the goat pastures about two miles away, with a very deep wooded valley between. We sat down in the heather in the warm sunlight, and studied the mountain with our glasses. Presently we located four goats, tiny white specks to the eye, but very plain through the glasses. So we got into the woods and began a long stalk, down through the valley, across the streams of turbid glacial water, up the other side until we reached the edge of the trees, with nothing between us and the goats, who were still unsuspecting. One of them was asleep about 250 yards off; the others about 600 yards away near the top of the slope. We had agreed that Edgar should

A Letter from British Columbia

take the sleeping one, and that I should try for those higher up, and with everything ready we knelt down and opened fire. Edgar laid his out about the third shot, but it was some time before I could tell whether I was shooting high or low at mine, and they were going up the cliff at a surprising rate. Finally I hit one, but they are very hard to kill, and he kept on going. I kept pumping the rifle, and soon ran out of cartridges, when Shorty, who has the same caliber, ran up with a handful out of his rifle. Talk about manna and quails in the wilderness, or money from home! They are not in it with cartridges when your supply is gone, and the game is still running. In the midst of all this excitement Edgar's goat, which was apparently safely dead,—having rolled about 50 feet down the slope—got up and began to run. Edgar kept shooting, but the goat reached the cliffs and finally got to a shelf more than half a mile away and lay down. Mine also climbed up the perpendicular rock and ultimately got away over the top. So the result was no goat to bring back—but a wonderfully exciting experience. And how we did laugh when the shooting was all over and we were watching through the field glasses to see our goats climb out of range. We kept on watching them for nearly an hour expecting to see at least one of them give out and fall about a thousand feet to where we could climb five or six hundred and get him.

Another day we went with Shorty and Tom to the high open country where Shorty, on a scouting expedition, had seen a band of caribou. After we had

VERT & VENISON

been walking an hour or so, and had pumped our lungs empty a good many times, as we came to the edge of a deep rocky valley, Tom dropped down and pointed to the dark slope of slide rock on the other side, where, after some looking, I saw a caribou bull slowly strolling along as if it was just as pleasant to walk on a rock pile as on the nice green grass lower down in the valley. We lay flat in the heather watching him with the glasses and he was surely a splendid sight. His neck was silver gray, the rest of his body a very dark mouse color, and his neck and horns positively shone when the sun touched them. He was headed for the top of the valley, and as soon as he crossed the sky line we dropped over into the valley and started after him. This sounds like the statement of a simple act; but it was in fact a long and complicated process, involving zigzagging down a steep slide into the valley to the bottom, up the rocks at the head and crawling at the top when we reached the sky line. There we looked away down into another deep valley which we searched with the glasses; but no caribou. We found his tracks on a snow bank, and Shorty—who is a sharp-eyed hunter—soon saw him on the top of a pile of absolutely bare rock which rose from our ridge about a thousand feet. Edgar—who was to have the standing shot—started up with Shorty, while I skirted around the base. When they reached the top the first thing they saw was the bull down in the bottom of a still deeper valley and walking with magnificent unconcern along the grass. They came hurrying down the rocks to where I stood and looking

A Letter from British Columbia

over the edge saw the bull about 500 yards below us crossing a patch of snow. Edgar opened up on him, and hit him at opposite ends, that is in the heel and in the back of the neck, but too near the surface to inflict an immediately disabling injury or even make him run, although it seemed to "queer" him and was a shot which would soon knock him out. But it turned him and he started back down the valley. At Shorty's suggestion I ran along the ridge in the same direction and finally got a good place—which we afterwards estimated at 600 yards,—sat down and fired three shots; two, God knows where—Edgar in the meantime hit him in the shoulder—and one in the neck, dropping him dead. Believe me, the old grandfather put his heart into that shooting! Of course the bull was Edgar's, as he got in the first hits; which would have killed the bull anyway; but I got as much fun as the situation could afford.

Shorty and Tom said he was the biggest bull they ever saw, the usual remark, I suppose.

A day or so afterwards we moved down along Caribou Creek to the moose country on the Beaver, where we now are in our fifth camp. We are in the heavy timber, giant spruces with very thick underbrush of alder and buck brush so that you can only see a short distance in any direction. It is ideal moose country, with boggy meadows and muddy sloughs.

As soon as we unpacked, about three o'clock, Shorty took Edgar and me up the river to a slough, something like a half a mile away, where there was a

VERT & VENISON

sort of natural lick with moose trails leading to it so beaten down with fresh tracks that it looked as if a pack train had just passed. We sat down on a little point at the bend of the slough, where we could look down both bends and toward the crossing on the river, and waited in silence. Shorty held two grasses for us to draw and Edgar drew the longest, so it was his shot. After about an hour and a half we heard a sound not unlike that of a big bullfrog croaking. I should not have thought it a moose, but Shorty held up his finger, so we sat even more quietly. Half an hour later we saw the back of a tall black beast—looking quite like a black horse, but taller—moving rapidly along the trail toward the lick in front of us. Edgar fired—as soon as we could see the horns and knew it was a bull—and the moose dropped. Then, sir, there was some excitement; for we did not know how badly he was hit, and could see him getting up on his forelegs. Shorty and I left Edgar where he stood, so that he could shoot again if the moose got up, and hurried around the bend of the slough and came up near him. He could see us then for the first time, and he certainly looked and acted like a beast who wanted—and tried—to get up and charge. We kept our rifles ready until Edgar came around and finished him with a couple of shots. And there, with darkness beginning to settle down on us, we had our first moose. And he certainly was a big one, about six feet high at the shoulder. Being used to deer I had no real conception of the size of a moose, and he seemed the biggest dead animal I had ever seen. Well,

A Letter from British Columbia

we had to act quickly; so I left Shorty and Edgar to skin out the head—for fear of bears or wolves in the night—and hurried back to camp to send Tom with a lantern while daylight lasted. They all got into camp about 7:30, where we had a great supper of caribou soup and steaks waiting for them. And the caribou soup which we are having is something which, even under less favorable circumstances, is calculated to attract favorable attention, and arouse the most jaded appetite.

I watched at the lick several days after this but saw nothing; probably the camp and the horses, who stayed about in a near-by meadow, scared the moose. So Shorty took us down the river about four miles to a large boggy meadow of "muskeg." It was a hard piece of work merely to get there. We had to follow the river, and while it was easy going when we could walk on the bars, most of the way was through an interlacing tangle of slippery alder and willow, with an extra supply of buck brush thrown in. We had to cross many creeks, either on fallen trees or beaver dams, wet, slippery work at the best. The muskeg itself was on the opposite side of the river, which runs rapidly and is pretty deep at the bends. A big tree had fallen across with its top resting on the farther bank, which was there about six feet above the water; so that with the roots holding up one end and the bank the other the trunk sagged down in the middle, forming a graceful curve which barely cleared the rushing water. The trunk was perfectly smooth, without a limb to support the wayfarer, and alto-

VERT & VENISON

gether it was about as unattractive a bridge for an elderly gentleman with a large family and no cow, as I have ever seen. Shorty and Tom, with packs on their backs, walked unconcernedly across to show us how it was done. I confess that I did not like it very much, but was unwilling to say so. I gave Shorty my rifle, took a big dead branch for a balancing pole and walked across. On the opposite side where the trunk was very small and the water deep, I had to step sideways to another parallel log about three feet away. This I accomplished and Edgar followed in safety.

We took our positons in a little clump of balsams on the river bank, the muskeg stretching for about 500 or 600 yards between us and a long high hill covered with dead trunks, down-timber, and some poplar and maple saplings which were turning yellow and red. Shorty left us and went up on this hillside where he could overlook the whole meadow and the crossings down the river, saying that he would wave his hat if he saw a moose coming. But he was so small and the hill so big that he was lost to sight in no time, and we never saw him at all.

It turned cold, and began to rain and after two or three hours we got pretty well chilled, and as the wind blew away from the meadow we foolishly thought it safe to light a small fire. How good that fire felt, but how bitterly do I reproach myself for the folly of lighting it, and with what shame do I confess that folly. For of course you must never light a fire (and, incidentally, must never be comfortable) when moose hunting.

A Letter from British Columbia

The wind veered around and blew our smoke straight out into the meadow. Pretty soon we heard a stentorian voice from the hill—quite like Ben Gunn's in *Treasure Island*—"Put out your fire." We kicked it into the river but the mischief was done, and in a little while Shorty came in and reported that a big bull had been coming straight toward us, but turned and went back when he smelled our smoke. What do you think of that? A man who has had as much experience as I have being such an asinine tenderfoot as to build a fire when he was watching for moose?

It was late then, growing dark and still raining. I crossed the log bridge safely again, heard a loud splash behind me and turned to see Shorty hauling Edgar out of the river. He had slipped in stepping from one log to the other, and went down nearly to his neck, firmly holding his rifle. He got up on the bridge again and came safely over, and we went through the wet tangled brush in the dark to camp, somewhat aided by the light of a candle in a tin can—what Shorty calls a "bug." It took us nearly two hours—judging by the time that Edgar's watch stopped—and when we reached camp you could not have told which one had been in the river, except that Edgar's breast pockets were wet and mine were not. But at camp we had a big seven-foot fire and a hot supper with plenty of tea and soup and moose liver ready for us, and were soon laughing over our adventures and misadventures. Except the fire we built at the meadow; of that we were all thoroughly ashamed.

The next day we tried it again at the same place, that is Shorty and I did, Edgar and Tom remaining on this side of the river. Shorty pointed out a particular red bush on the hillside and said he would be there at four o'clock, so that I would be sure to see him if he signaled again. He had waved his hat frantically the day before, but we had not seen him, to say nothing of his signals. I watched again; and the rain descended again, and the wind blew again, and I got cold again. But no thought of lighting a fire entered my head. After a while I saw Tom on the opposite side of the river making signs which I interpreted as meaning that a moose was coming up the river, but which he afterwards explained were merely a friendly inquiry whether I had seen anything. But this deception sharpened and renewed my interest in the general subject of moose. So I did some more "watchful waiting," and looked hopefully at Shorty on the hillside and ate prunes and chocolate alternately, but I did not smoke, and hoped that the general odor of my presence did not pervade the surrounding atmosphere to any great distance. When it was so dusk and raining so hard that I could hardly see Shorty with the glasses, and not at all without them, I saw a moose running on the opposite side of the meadow. It was then so dark and misty that I could not see whether Shorty was signaling or not, and could not be certain whether it was a bull. But from Tom's signals an hour or so earlier I concluded that this was the moose he referred to; so I stepped out of my cover and when the moose came

A Letter from British Columbia

out of the fringe of balsams—still running—I cut loose at him. I feel rather sure that I hit him the second shot, if not the first, but it was hard to tell, for he was 400 yards if he was an inch, and the rain was blurring everything. He turned and ran the other way, grandfather firing merrily all the time. Finally he stopped suddenly—that is the moose did—and dropped at the next shot. So I had had my first shot at a moose and got him.

Shorty came down from the hill and as the moose was on his side of a wide wet meadow I waited for his report. He said it was a spike horn bull, and that we had better leave him until morning. So we crossed the log bridge, picked up Edgar and Tom and went back to camp in the rain and dark, but this time with more comfort; for Shorty and Tom had cut a trail in the morning. That was yesterday and now (September 26th)—the rain continuing—Edgar and I are in camp while the men have gone to get the moose's head, hide and some of the meat. Tomorrow we start back, making three camps on the way out to Shorty's ranch on the Fraser.

The men have just returned with my moose's head and about 100 pounds of the meat. They took measurements showing these dimensions:

Height at shoulder	59 inches
Height at hind leg	58 inches
Girth	75 inches
Length—nose to tail	90 inches

Which shows that he was a fair-sized animal, if his horns are small. I can also report that I fired seven

VERT & VENISON

shots and hit him four times, three running and one standing.

The Beaver River—it is really more than a creek—is a swift glacial stream with turbid water of a greenish blue color, something like the color of diluted skim milk, but very beautiful in the sunlight. It twists about through a channel of sand and pebbles, between brushy banks, at the bottom of a narrow valley with high, steep hills running up above timber line into the caribou country on both sides. The bottom of the valley between the slopes is level, heavy timber alternating with open meadows, and stretches of willow and alder. As a moose country it leaves nothing to be desired. With a canoe or boat you could absolutely command the situation and get your two moose in a few days. There are some large poplar trees out of which dugouts could be made; and Shorty says he will have some kind of a craft here next year without fail. I long to go down, or up, it in a canoe; for it is a perfectly wild, untouched river. A few trappers have been here years ago, but they of course do not disturb the big game at all; indeed I should not have suspected that they had ever been here if Shorty had not pointed out a few old axe marks, and some blazes of an old trap line. The river bars show all kinds of tracks, bear, moose, wolves, lynxes, and innumerable beaver. I can imagine nothing pleasanter than slipping silently down it in a canoe, with your camp stuff comfortably stowed amidships, seeing all the wild life, and pitching camp wherever you liked.

A Letter from British Columbia

Our camp had meat enough to supply a fair-sized butcher shop. We kept it all and cached it at different places where the men could come back and get it for winter use. We have great sides and joints hung up on poles between the trees, smoking it slightly to keep it sweet. We have reveled in meat and soups, which Charley, the cook, makes with a master hand. We have had roast moose and caribou heart, liver and kidneys, besides tenderloin, and roasts and steaks innumerable. I have never eaten so much meat in the same space of time. The moose meat is very much better than I expected it would be, but is not as good as the caribou.

One night a pack of timber wolves came howling near the camp, probably attracted by our meat. They are great big black fellows, and their chorus makes you think of all the wolf stories you ever heard—except that of Romulus and Remus.

The rain we had in our camp on the Beaver was snow up in the mountains, so we had a pretty hard trip the first day when we moved up on our way out. All the saddle horses, except mine and Edgar's, were packed with meat, heads and horns, so we were well loaded, and made a very picturesque procession, winding along the trail. It was a hard, rough trail, and we had to walk most of the way, climbing something like 2500 feet, and with a foot of snow at the top. It was cold and we were thoroughly wet and tired. Shorty had a little trapping cabin on one of the lakes under the edge of a glacier at timber line, so as it was late we made for that to avoid making camp in

VERT & VENISON

the snow, with all our packropes, etc., frozen stiff. Shorty himself was "all in," and we had to make him comfortable with some of our dry clothing. That rough little cabin certainly felt comfortable when we got a fire going in the sheet iron stove and hot water boiling for tea in the camp kettle.

We left early the next morning—4:45 is our regular hour for waking up the men to start the camp fire and wrangle the horses. Fortunately the day was bright and clear, and the snow which now covered everything gave a new appearance to the country through which we had come a few weeks before and which was then all green and gold. Edgar and I rode ahead with Shorty looking for caribou. We saw none, but struck the track of a big she grizzly with a cub. This looked promising and we followed the tracks for several hours, at first over the high plateaus, then through our camp at Snowshoe Pass, then down the side of the valley toward Horse Creek. Here they were in heavy timber and the going was so steep that there was no chance of our catching up with them, so we finally gave up the chase, and walked down the switchback to the foot of the glacier at the head of Horse Creek. Here we prospected around looking for a possible goat, but found none, and walked on to where the men had made camp in a balsam thicket by the edge of the creek. That was really the last of our hunting. The next morning we started early and rode all day in the rain and snow, camping in a snowstorm, with everything wet, but plenty to eat. We slept soundly, for

A Letter from British Columbia

our sleeping bags were dry, and dry blankets and good hot food make even a wet camp comfortable.

The next day—September 30th—we rode about eight miles along Horse Creek, much of the way through patches of snow-laden willows and alders which bent down over the trail and switched across our necks and faces, reaching Shorty's cabin at noon. There we had our final dinner of moose meat, shaved for the first time in many days, and changed to our civilized clothes. A pack horse to carry our bags up to the railroad and two saddle horses to carry us, forded the Fraser, which we crossed in a long narrow boat with a great sheer fore and aft,—a regular “white water boat”—and our hunt was over. As we turned to look back we saw Charley, our cook, run out of the cabin and bring down a big owl which had lighted in a tree preparatory to a dash at the chickens.

And what, I wonder, were you doing during all this time, so many thousand miles away with the troops in Texas? Working hard I know, and securing a fund of experiences which you will always prize and which will furnish material for many stories when the troops return, and the Tenneys all foregather under the family roof-tree on Pine Street.

*On a Copy of Manwood's "Forest
Lawes"*

By ancient law the nobles held
The privilege of chase,
And deemed it something far above
The men of common race.

But not from Charter of Canute
Did this high right arise,
Nor could his parchments give it force,
Or mark its boundaries.

To every man in equal share
By primal right it goes,
Our rifles but repeat a sound,
The twang of cave-men's bows.

To those far men and all their sons
We pledge the cup of grace,
"Good hunting" is the token call
Of brethren of the chase.

This book records the selfish law;
We claim a higher place
For that which knows the equal right
Of brethren of the chase.

The Forest Laws of Old England

THE records of the past, whether in the form of literature or history, or in that earlier form of verbal and mental record called tradition, seem clearly to show that a love of hunting is inherent in man. Doubtless in these days when pleasures pall by their very number, and by the diversity of the means of destroying, through satiety, the capacity for enjoyment, there are many who, never having felt within them the stir of the "hunting sense," would deny its existence as a universal trait. But the individual instance, or the individual ignorance, of qualities which, though dormant, are yet present, cannot outweigh the testimony of generations. If we look back through the ages in which the Anglo-Saxon people has been separating itself from the other Northern races by adopting and developing their best qualities, we find abundant evidence of the truth of this statement. For throughout our history, and both in history and in the literature which paints the pictures of contemporary history, king and noble, gentle and simple, have followed the chase. Whether it is hard-headed and hard-handed Edward I or Lion-Hearted Richard, riding with hawk and hound through the forests of Exmoor and Sherwood, or gentle Rip Van Winkle, wandering with flintlock fowling piece in the wooded valleys of the Catskills, the instinct which takes them afield is

VERT & VENISON

the same. If, to satisfy our modern craving for psychological investigation, we try to analyze this instinct, we probably will reach no other result than to call it a heritage from the primal man,—a conclusion which certainly would not satisfy any mere psychologist. But if the psychologist is also a hunter, he will be content to leave at least one mental trait free from the imprisonment of scientific classification. For this desire to hunt the “beasts of forest, chase and warren,” though it has come down to us from the cave man, is yet not a mere savage delight in blood letting. It does not indicate a natural antagonism toward the lower animals. The strongest advocates of the game laws are the keenest hunters.

We do not need to account for the love of hunting as did old James of Douglas when he said:

The chase I follow far,
'Tis mimicry of noble war.

He lived in an age when fighting occupied the time and attention of all men; when a man kept his head on his shoulders by the strength of his right hand, and when longevity was not so much the result of steady habits as of skillful sword play.

But do we need to account for it at all? May we not simply accept it as a fact, a human characteristic which, having outlived the days of oppression, having flourished during the struggles which finally won for the liberties of the people recognition as a commonplace right, and still existing in undiminished vigor, is entitled to respectful recognition, even if we cannot wholly account for its presence in our nature?

The Forest Laws of Old England

The fact that this instinct is not a matter of class, rank or education, gives us the means of a clearer understanding of the essential difference between the spirit of the forest laws of mediaeval England, and of our modern game laws. We recognize all men as possessing equal rights; not only is this a principle of our law, but the recognition of it is so deep-seated in our nature as to be habitual and commonplace. And in this particular matter we have gone back to the principle of the Germans whom Caesar found in the dark forests of the Rhine, and the Britons whom he found in Kent, the principle which Blackstone expresses when he says:

It cannot be denied that by the law of nature every man from the prince to the peasant has an equal right of pursuing, and of taking to his own use, all such creatures as are *ferae naturae*, and therefore the property of nobody, but liable to be seized by the first occupant.

We pass laws regulating the exercise, by all men without distinction, of the privilege of hunting both upon their own land and the lands of others. These laws are based upon the principle that wild animals are the property of the state, which, therefore, has the right to regulate their pursuit. But we regard this ownership by the state as an ownership for and by the people equally; and in this respect it is essentially different from the ownership which was the royal prerogative of the kings of England. To them it was a personal right, not possessed by any subject unless granted as a mark of kingly favor.

VERT & VENISON

This no doubt was a natural result of the theory of the divine right of kings, when that theory supplanted the kingship which meant leadership and arose from personal pre-eminence. For the sovereign and the nobles who surrounded him looked upon the lower orders of society almost as a different race. They could not conceive that a serf or villein really had in his make-up any place in which the capacity to enjoy something which pleased their royal fancy could find natural lodgment. They looked upon their inborn delight in hunting as something peculiar to their own class, and resented, as a plain trespass upon their rights, any attempt by the common people to give vent to a similar feeling. The old-time forest laws were therefore in no sense, either in spirit or provision, like our game and forestry laws, but were designed to restrict the privilege of hunting to the king and those to whom he granted it. The laws of "vert and venison" protected the forest not as a measure of public utility, but only as and because it was a covert for the game; and protected the game only as a means of pleasure for the king and the nobles to whom he granted the right of hunting.

Perhaps no better illustration can be found to show how deeply imbedded and how persistent this idea was in English minds than the preface to Manwood's *Forest Lawes*. This treatise was written by John Manwood in the days of Elizabeth. At that time the forest laws had lost much of their old time severity, and the rights of the common people had been expressed in and secured by the Great Charter

The Forest Laws of Old England

for more than three hundred and fifty years. But the throne still cast its shadow on the land, dimming where it fell the growing light of popular freedom.

Manwood speaks of the origin of the forest laws in these quaint words:

The auncient Lawes of this realme having alwaies had a speciall regard unto the continuall studie and care that Kings and Princes have in great and meightie affaires of matters of Commonweale, for the good of their Subjects, whereby they are often times wearied with the toyle of the same; in respect thereof, the Game Lawes have given unto them divers royall prerogatives of most noble and princely pleasures to recreate themselves with all, to put away from them the remembrance of their laborsome toyle. Amongst which prerogatives, the royall prerogative of the libertie of a Forest is not the least: For, a Forest both is and hath beene alwaies accounted a franchise of such noble and Princely pleasure, that it is not incident unto any subject of this realme to have the same, but only unto the Crowne and royall dignitie of a Prince. And therefore there have beene alwaies certaine particular lawes differing from the Common Lawes of this Realme, that were only proper unto a Forest, belonging to the same for the continuance of it.

Truly as we look back upon some of these royal personages and consider their characters, this conception of their reason for reserving to themselves the privileges of the forest seems very droll. And there is a deliciously humorous flavor in the idea that stout William of Normandy,—who cut off the hands and feet of his prisoners and threw them over the walls at the siege of Alençon, because the townsmen taunted him with being the son of a tanner's daughter,—or King John,—who at Runnymede gave reluctant assent to the charter which provided that no person should lose liberty or property except by the

VERT & VENISON

judgment of his peers or the law of the land—had to go a-hunting to recuperate from their “laborsome toyle” in behalf of their subjects. And as showing the contradictions of his character and his feelings toward his subjects the old historians in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle say of William: “He loved the wild deer as though he had been their father. Who-soever should slay hart or hind, man should blind him.”

The very word “forest” has with us in America a different meaning from that which it had in the English law. It suggests to us the thought of primal freedom, not of rule and repression; and the vaulted aisles of the forest seem to us better fitted for the exercise of the inherent rights of the individual than for the enforcement of the domination of one man over another. Stevenson touched this thought in the outlaw’s song:

Here is no law in good green shaw,
Here is no lack of meat.
We’re merry and quiet with deer for our diet,
In summer when all is sweet.

We use the word “forest” as synonymous with the more common word “woods.” The early settlers here found a country which on every hand was heavily timbered. It was many years before the fertile prairies were even known, and several generations before these grassy plains saw the settler advance from the cover of the woods which fringed their eastern border. To the pioneer the forest was something to be overcome. The clearing of the

The Forest Laws of Old England

ground from the encumbrance of the trees was the first step toward making the country habitable and opening a way for the ploughshare. Pine and hemlock, oak, and maple, and cypress stood in serried ranks opposing the advance of civilization, guarding the serenity of the repose in which the continent so long had slumbered. In the mind of the settler the trees, like the Indians who lurked in their shelter, were useful only when killed. The vastness of the woods with which the country was covered, the abundance of game, the immediate source of revenue which the fur trade supplied, the fact that every man had to subdue for himself all the land of which he could make use, the impossibility of controlling the actions of others, and above all, the free and independent character of the men by whom the country was settled, combined to make it impossible for them to conceive that the unrestricted use of that which was thus spread before them with Nature's prodigality was not one of the inherent rights of man. Their view of the situation was expressed by old Leatherstocking in *The Pioneers*, when Judge Temple graciously gave him permission to hunt. "There's them living who say that Natty Bumppo's right to shoot on these hills is of older date than Marmaduke Temple's right to forbid him."

The old-world idea of a forest, forming a part, as it did, of the feudal system, and affected by the theory of the rights of property and the rights of men which underlay that system, never obtained in America, and is quite inconsistent with much that we are now

VERT & VENISON

accustomed to regard as fundamental. And it is therefore somewhat difficult for us to appreciate the strictly technical sense in which the word "forest" was anciently used in England, and the still more strict and technical character of the rules and customs which made up the code known as the Forest Laws. These laws provided no "open season" for game, but made it "open season" at all times for the man who was caught poaching on the King's demesne woods.

The period of English history in which the Forest Laws were codified, and in which they were most severely enforced is one which is surrounded with all the charm and glamour which the magic of antiquity can create. In entering upon it we pass—

The border land of old romance,
Where glitter hauberk, helm and lance,
And banner waves and trumpet sounds,
And ladies ride with hawk on wrist,
And mighty warriors sweep along,
Magnified by the purple mist
The dusk of centuries and of song.

It was the age of chivalry, when the barbarism of the Dark Ages was placed in sharp contrast with the ideals of knight errantry; when the "long keels" of the Norse Vikings were landing on every shore worth the harrying; when Norman absolutism was repressing the free Saxon institutions with which it was afterwards to coalesce; when the better part of France was an appanage of the British crown, and when the cloth-yard shafts of English bowmen were winning on foreign fields those victories which ex-

The Forest Laws of Old England

tended England's greatness and served also to unify the warring factions of her people. Those were stern days, and perhaps we need the perspective of a thousand years to find in them aught of beauty or romance. But we do find it, and not only in great events, but in the more homely happenings when king and commoner met in the forest pathways.

The conflicts over breaches of the Forest Laws have furnished much material for the tradition and literature of the people,—a fact which shows how deep seated and how persistent under repression was the belief in the principle which Blackstone expresses, that the right of hunting was inherent in both prince and peasant. The outlaw whose head was forfeit for killing the king's deer has ever been the popular hero in song and story. Robin Hood and his merry men still hold in our affections the place created for them by that old-time regard which makes them, though mythical, outlive the nobles who oppressed them and the laws which they defied. For they stand as typical of the protest of the people against the unequal distribution of inherent rights.

What boy who has read *Ivanhoe* does not have a higher respect for King Richard for his alliance with Robin Hood, Little John and Friar Tuck in the green glades of Sherwood Forest?

Sir Thomas Lucy's only claim to fame lies in the fact that Shakespeare broke the law by killing his deer. What would we know or care of this testy knight but for the halo with which this circumstance invests him, lighting the obscurity of time just

VERT & VENISON

enough to make him visible in this one incident of his career?

Before the Norman conquest introduced the feudal system in England the law recognized the right of every freeman to hunt in his own land. But this did not, in a practical sense, really make the privilege at all general; for the actual ownership of land was confined to comparatively few persons. Notwithstanding this recognition of a right on the part of the subject, there was a strict code of laws which hedged about the royal privilege, protecting it from encroachment by the common people. In the lands belonging to the Crown, which included not only those reduced to possession, but also wild or waste lands, there were set apart certain districts, consisting of what we would call "good hunting country," which were designated as forests, and preserved for the king's hunting. Within these districts a special set of laws were in force, differing in many respects from the common law. The privilege of maintaining a forest was strictly a royal prerogative and the name therefore applied only to the king's property.

Manwood gives this definition of a forest,—and then devotes eleven pages of redundant and repetitious black-letter to what he calls "An explanation of the aforesaid Definition:"

A forest is a certaine Territorie of wooddy grounds and fruitfull pastures, privileged for wild beasts and foules of Forest, Chase and Warren, to rest and abide in, in the safe protection of the King, for his princely delight and pleasure, which Territorie of ground, so privileged, is meered and bounded with unremovable markes, meeres, and boundaries, either knowen by

The Forest Laws of Old England

matter of record, or else by prescription: And also replenished with wilde beasts of venerie or chase, and with great coverts of Vert, for the succour of the said wild beasts, to have their abode in. For the preservation and continuance of which said place, together with the Vert and Venison, there are certaine particular Lawes, Privileges and Officers, belonging to the same, meete for that purpose, that are only proper unto a Forest, and not to any other place.

And therefore a forest doth chiefly consist of these foure things, that is to say, of vert, venison, particular lawes and privileges, and of certain meete officers appointed for that purpose, to the end that the same may the better be preserved and kept for a place of recreation and pastime for the royal dignity of a Prince.

The forest laws obtained only within the forest, and as the forest was maintained as a hunting preserve, they dealt almost exclusively with that subject. But as these forests covered large tracts in which many people dwelt, it was necessary not merely to forbid the actual killing of the game, but to regulate the use of the land itself which might affect it as a range or covert for the beasts, in whose pursuit the king found recreation from the affairs of state. So that anything like husbandry within the forest was prohibited. Thus there were two subjects of the Forest Laws called "vert" and "venison," the former including the forest in a physical sense, and the latter the game,—for anciently the word "venison" applied to all game, and was not, as with us, confined to the flesh of the deer.

In the early part of the eleventh century the Danes, notwithstanding Alfred's victories, still held sway over a great part of England, and Canute, son of the old viking Sweyn Forkbeard of Denmark, held the

throne. One of the notable events of his reign,—rather more successful than his attempt to forbid the rising of the tide—was the codification of the Forest Laws. This was done by what is called the Charter of the Forest, granted at Winchester in 1016. Among its provisions was one which gave the right to every freeman to hunt upon his own land, thus expressly recognizing that which was a part of the Saxon Law.

Just a half a century later the Standard fell on the hill at Senlac, and the mailed hand of the Norman changed the course of England's law. The introduction of the feudal system wrought a change in the theory of land tenure, and with it a corresponding change in the game laws. By the feudal law all land belonged to the king and was held by tenure from him; and the title to all game was in the king, who had and alone could grant the right of hunting upon any land within the kingdom. And this right could be exercised by the king even upon lands in the possession of other men, who by their occupancy would seem to have the ordinary rights of private ownership. Absolute power is almost certain of abuse, even in the best hands, and the kings of those days knew neither ruth nor moderation in its exercise. Controlling the land and its disposition they not only kept the old forests of the Saxon and Danish kings, but extended them by "afforesting" new districts, including not only the crown lands but those held by subjects. The lands thus brought under the operation of the Forest Laws in many cases contained villages and farms, and the ordinary

The Forest Laws of Old England

occupations of village and farm life, being inconsistent with the quiet of the king's deer, great hardship was imposed upon the inhabitants; for no man could cut an oak bough in the forest without being "in the king's mercy," and for the death of a deer the four neighboring towns were held answerable. And at that time to be answerable to the king in "merrie England," and to his verderors who construed and enforced the law was no light matter.

This form of oppression was carried on with increasing rigor by the kings who succeeded the Conqueror, and reached its height in the reign of that prince of tyrants, King John, who went to the extent of prohibiting the capture of birds throughout England. Of the extent of the New Forests Manwood says:

"These three kings, that is to say, King Richard the first, King John and King Henry the second had them newly afforested so much of the lands of their subjects that the greatest part of this realme was then become forest."

When King John on June 15, 1215, signed the Magna Charta "at the meadow called Runing mede between Windsor and Staines," he was forced to recognize and to give promise of redress for some of these grievances. Two of the provisions of the Charter were that:

47. All forests that have been made forests in our time shall forthwith be disafforested; and the same shall be done with the water banks that have been fenced in by us in our time.

48. All evil customs concerning forests, warrens, foresters and warreners, sheriffs, and their officers, rivers and their keepers shall forthwith be inquired into in each county, by

VERT & VENISON

twelve sworn knights of the same shire, chosen by creditable persons of the same county; and within forty days after the said inquest be utterly abolished, so as never to be restored: so as we are first acquainted therewith, or our judiciary, if we should not be in England.

It also gave assurance of disafforesting some of the land seized by his predecessors. These provisions were very general in their wording, and John had rather a poor memory for promised reforms and favored the doctrine of strict construction of charters. He had also promised himself the pleasure of emulating the example of his brother Richard by going on a crusade. And on this pretense,—for with him the pen was far mightier than the sword,—he inserted in the charter a provision which gave him respite from fulfilling some of its conditions until he had performed this sacred duty, assuring his troublesome subjects that “when we return from our pilgrimage, or if we tarry at home, and do not make our pilgrimage, we will immediately do full justice to all the complainants in this behalf.”

King John did not long survive the disappointment of sealing a charter which contained express recognition of the fundamental rights of man, and probably very little was done in a practical way during his time toward carrying out these reforms in matters pertaining to the forests. In 1216 his son Henry the Third came to the throne, a boy of nine years, and on November 6, 1217, there was issued in his name a new Charter of the Forest. This charter repeated some of the provisions contained in Magna Charta with reference to the forests, but extended very

The Forest Laws of Old England

greatly the relief against the seizure of land by former kings. It provided that—

All forests which King Henrie our grandfather afforested and made, shall be viewed by good and lawful men, and if he have made forest of any other wood, more than of his own demesne, whereby the owner of the wood hath hurt, we will that forthwith it be disafforested. And if he have made forest of no men's wood but of his owne, then We will that it remaine forest still.

All woods which have beene made forests by King Richard our uncle, or by K. John our father, unto our first coronation, shall be forthwith disafforested, unless it be our demesne wood.

The provision that the forests made by Henry the Second should be "viewed by good and lawful men" was an important one. For it served not only to determine what land should be disafforested, but also the boundaries of the forests.

This survey or "perambulation," as it was called, was necessary to check a form of abuse which had become a substantial oppression. For the boundaries of the forests were not very definitely ascertained, and the tendency of the king and his verderors was to extend them wherever the hunting was good enough to make it worth while. This rendered it uncertain where the operation of the common law ended and that of the Forest Laws began, an uncertainty which the king found no practical difficulty in solving according to his own interests. The settlements of these boundaries therefore was a substantial reform.

The first of the "perambulations" was made under letters patent issued by the King on July 24, 1218,

granting authority to twelve knights selected by John Marshall, a justice of the forest, and were continued by various other commissions during the long reign of Henry the Third, and that of Edward the First who succeeded him. As might be expected, the result of these perambulations was not always satisfactory to the people. For the "good and lawful knights" would sometimes decide that land which the inhabitants claimed should be disafforested had been rightly taken by "King Henrie our grandfather"; and in some cases they even extended the bounds of the royal forests to lands which the occupants claimed had always been free. But in 1300 a commission was appointed by Edward the First, which made a new perambulation, and made it with an eye single to the interests of the people. King Henry's Charter of the Forest proceeded upon the assumption that everything done by Richard and John was illegal, and provided that all land which they had afforested should be freed at once. These perambulators, who did their work in the greenwood in the opening year of the fourteenth century, seized upon this provision, and having power to pass upon the question of fact, disregarded the surveys made by their predecessors and disafforested large tracts of land which had been under the Forest Laws more than a century, by holding that the wicked Richard and John had afforested them. The record of their work, dated at Warwick "on Wednesday the feast of the apostles Peter and Paul in the twenty-eighth year of King Edward," shows that they possessed rare

The Forest Laws of Old England

discretion in giving reasons to justify their decisions; for it concludes with this entry:

And the jurors, on being asked how they know that the aforesaid lord King John afforested all the manors, towns, and hamlets aforesaid, say that they know by what their ancestors have related, and by the common talk of the country.

By the surveys or perambulations thus made by King Henry and "Longshanks," his son, the boundaries of the forests were settled and made matter of record. But while the forests were thus reduced in extent, and large tracts of land were relieved from much of the oppression of the Forest Laws, yet a singular condition of affairs was created. Where land thus disafforested adjoined a forest it was called a "pourallee," a corrupted old French word meaning about the same as "perambulation." And this pourallee was relieved from the Forest Laws only in favor of the former owner of the land, who thus had the privilege of cutting wood, tilling the ground and hunting. But his hunting rights were still restricted, for royal prerogatives died hard. He could hunt the deer *toward* the forest, but could not "forestal nor foreset them in their returne towards the forest againe." And within the pourallee the king still maintained his rangers "to attend upon the wild beasts of the Forest and to rechase them backe againe out of the Pourallee into the Forest." So zealously guarded was this regal right that the Assizes of Woodstock passed by Henry the Second, made it an offense punishable by a year's imprisonment to "forestal" a deer in his attempt to regain the sanctuary of the

VERT & VENISON

forest, "either with dogges, gunne, crossbow, long-bow, dead hey, quick hey, or any maner of engin or let whatsoever." And during the reign of Henry the Sixth it was gravely decided in court "that if a Hart doe goe out of the Forest of the King, the King's foresters may follow after him, and make Proclamation in the next Townes, where the same Hart is, that no man shall hunt or slay him, and that then after that such proclamation is made it is not lawful for any man to take or slay such a Hart." This decision certainly justifies Manwood's comment that "the Pourallee in some sort is forest still for the king's wild beasts to have their free concourse in, and safe returne againe to the forest." And to make the matter plain and simple so that no man need forget himself in the ardor of the chase, the author continues:

Therefore to the end that a pourallee man may the better remember briefly in what sort hee may hunt in the pourallee, let him learne the six lessons:

1. That hee doe beginne his chase in his own pourallee.
2. That hee doe not forestal nor kill the wild beasts with any Engin.
3. That before his dogs do enter in the forest he do repeale and call them back againe.
4. That in no sort he do pursue his dogs into the forest, except that they fasten upon the deere first, and that the deere do draw the dogs into the forest and then kill the same.
5. That he do hunt with no more companie but his own servants.
6. That he do hunt no unseasonable deere."

The word "forest" was always used in its technical sense of a royal privilege, a franchise of so high a

The Forest Laws of Old England

nature that, as Manwood says, "It is not incident to any subject of this realme to have the same, but only unto the Crown and royall dignitie of a prince." But even the kings of mediaeval England made grants of land to their subjects, and such grants were a part of the feudal system by which the tenure of land ran from the king as the source of title down through the various orders of society from noble to commoner. When such a grant was made by the king of part of his forest lands it did not, except in a few rare cases and by express terms of the grant, carry with it this mighty and regal prerogative so as to vest the grantee with all his rights and make him a forest king. That which in the hands of the king was called a "forest" was in the hands of the subject called a "chase." There were many subtle distinctions made between the forest and the chase, much more sharply defined in early times than they were later when private rights and ownership received more definite recognition. In general terms the difference seems to have been that the Forest Laws, which restricted the right of hunting, still continued in force within the chase, but the forest courts, which were created for the purpose of protecting the king in this royal prerogative, and the officers who had charge of the forest, no longer exercised their exclusive and arbitrary jurisdiction. The owner of the chase thus had his hunting privileges protected by the Forest Laws, but had not the same summary means of enforcing his rights. In a royal forest a man accused of violating the Forest Laws was at once im-

VERT & VENISON

prisoned until he furnished pledges for his appearance at the next court of "forest eyre," when he was again imprisoned until he paid the ransom or fine which the king's justices rarely failed to exact. And the result of inability to pay the ransom usually was that he was compelled to "abjure the realm." The lord of a chase could arrest a "trespasser against the venison," only when he was caught "with the main-our," that is, red-handed. He could then detain him until he made satisfaction for the trespass, but, in theory at least, he did not have an arbitrary and unlimited right in this respect, and must act through the court which he himself maintained for that purpose. In practice, however, the man who was caught in his lord's woods with a red stain on his doublet of Lincoln green, or with a bloody arrow in his quiver, would see little difference between a forest and a chase. For neither the keeper who caught him, nor the justice whom the lord appointed, nor the lord himself to whom both felt answerable, discussed technical limitations upon their arbitrary powers. And the lords of the chase had always asserted greater power in this respect than was accorded them by the king. A trace of this contest of jurisdiction between king and noble is seen in one of the recitals in the record of parliament in 1235 in the reign of Henry the Third, which says:

Concerning parks and ponds it is not yet discussed, for the lords demanded the proper imprisonment of such as they should take in their parks and ponds, which the king denied. Wherefore it was deferred.

The Forest Laws of Old England

There can be little doubt that a right thus freely claimed in parliament did not lack rigorous enforcement in the greenwood.

While Henry III at first denied to the owners of parks the summary right of imprisoning trespassers, an express remedy severe enough to satisfy the most exacting of feudal lords was not long withheld from them. The statute of Westminster of 1275 contained this provision:

It is provided also for trespassers in parkes and ponds, that if any be thereof attained at the suit of the partie, great and large amends shall be awarded according to the trespass, and three yeares imprisonment, and after shall make fine at the king's pleasure (if he have whereof) and then shall find good suretie that after he shall not commit like trespass. And if he have not whereof to make fine after three yeares imprisonment, he shall find like suretie, and if he cannot find like suretie he shall abjure the Realme. And if any guiltie thereof be fugitive and have no land nor tenement sufficient (whereby he may be justified,) so soone as the king shall find it by enquest, he shall be proclaimed from County to County and if he come not he shall be outlawed.

A park differed from a chase in being enclosed, while a chase was open. As any enclosure of land impeded the free movement of the game and of the royal hunters who found their princely delight in its pursuit, the Forest Laws did not allow the occupant of land within the forest to build a hedge or fence. And when a grant of a chase was made the land was ordinarily kept open and not enclosed except by special permission. When this right of enclosure was granted, or obtained by immemorial usage, the owner could create a park for his game. But this

VERT & VENISON

right of enclosure carried with it the obligation to maintain a fence which would keep the deer out as well as in; for deer who wandered from the forest into one of these enclosures ceased to be the exclusive property of the king, and as the Forest Laws no longer applied, the owner of the park might lawfully kill them. The wily owner of a park would often construct "deer leaps" in his fence to encourage the ingress, but prevent the egress, of any wandering roebuck. When this was done near a royal forest the owner was prosecuted in the forest courts for maintaining a "nuisance" to the forest.

Another subdivision of hunting rights was that which was called "warren" or "free warren," a word which originally signified the privilege of hunting and thus came to be used to designate a place in which the privilege could be exercised. It applied to the smaller kinds of game which did not stand as high in the kingly estimation as the royal stag. This privilege of free warren like our modern hunting license, giving the right of hunting in certain lands, upon condition, that the grantee should prevent others from exercising the same privilege. The purpose of this condition, like that of our license, was to protect the game, and Blackstone says that a man who possessed this right was "in effect no more than a royal game keeper."

These divisions of the privilege of hunting produced or were accompanied by similar classifications of the game itself, which was accordingly divided into "beasts of forest, chase and warren."

The Forest Laws of Old England

Manwood makes this classification of the game to which the Forest Laws applied. The beasts of forest—beasts of venerie—were the hart, the hind (the male and female of the red deer), the hare, the boar and the wolf. The beasts of chase were the buck, the doe, the fox, the matron (martin) and the roe. The beasts and fowls of warren were the hare, the “connie,” the pheasant and the partridge.

It is rather difficult to see any logical scheme running through this classification, and its accuracy in some particulars is criticised by the editor of the edition of “Pleas of the Forest Courts” (p. X) published by the Selden Society. But Manwood’s attempt to give, with the didactic accuracy of a legal author, the reason for the classification is much more interesting in its old-time phraseology than the true solution of a problem which can never keep us from sleeping sound o’ nights. He says:

As there is a great difference between a Forest and a Chase, so there is said to be as great difference between the beasts of the Forest and the beasts of the Chase; the beasts of the Forest they are *tantum sylvestres*; and the beasts of the Chase are *Campestres tantum*. For the beasts of the Forest doe make their abode, all the day time in the great coverts and secret places in the woods. And in the night season they doe repaire into the lawnes, meadowes, pastures and pleasant feedings for their food and reliefe. And therefore they are called Sylvesters, that is to say, beasts of the wood, or beasts that doe haunt the woods more than the plaines, according as the Prophet David saith in his 104 Psalme, “Thou makest darknesse that it may bee night, wherein all the beasts of the Forest doe moove. The Lyons roaring after their prey, doe seeke the meate at God. The Sonne ariseth and they get them away together, and lay downe in their dennes.” And so the beasts of the Forest are onely

VERT & VENISON

those, that doe keepe the coverts, which are called beasts of venerie. And the beasts of Chase they doe make their abode all the daie time in the fields and upon the hils, or high mountaines, where they may see round about them afarre off, who doth stirre or come neere them; and in the night season, when everybody is at rest, and all is quiet, then they doe repaire unto the corne fields, and vallies below, where the lawnes, meadows and pleasant feedings are for their food and reliefe, and therefore they are called Campestres, that is to say, beasts of the field, or beasts that doe haunt the fields more than the woods.

With this very general outline of the theories which separated king and subject when they met under the groined arches of old England's forests, let us look at some of the particular provisions of the Forest Laws.

In Canute's charter of 1016 we find many traces of the old heathen ideas and of the customs which made the serf or villein a fixture or incident to the land upon which he was born. It is written in the barbarous Latin of those days, but contains throughout references to the English words and phrases. Thus it provides that the verderors, regardors and foresters shall have authority to proceed against an offender to threefold judgment "which the English call gangfordel"; but that "trial by fire is not to be admitted except where the naked truth cannot be otherwise investigated."

If any man offer force to a verderor if he be a freeman, he shall lose his freedom; if a villein, he shall lose his right hand. If he offend again, he shall lose his life.

If any man do contend with a verderor in suit, he shall forfeit to the king as much as he is worth, and to the verderor ten shillings.

The Forest Laws of Old England

I may remark, in passing, that the charter contains no suggestion as to the means by which the verderor was to collect his ten shillings after the king had taken all the offender possessed.

"If any man do strike a regardor, in anger, he shall forfeit as if he had killed a royal beast."

The charter clearly shows with what astonishment those who drew it would have regarded the "self evident truth" in our Declaration of Independence, "that all men are created equal." For, aside from its provisions for different punishments for different classes of men, it contains the general statement that "there shall not be one and the same penalty for all; there shall be one for freemen,—whom the Danes call Earldermen — and another for bondmen; one for Master and another for serf; one for the known and another for the unknown.

"If a freeman pursue a beast of the forest, whether by chance or wilfully, so as to make him pant he shall pay ten shillings to the king; if he be not free, he shall pay double; if he be a bondman, he shall lose his skin." And if the beast who was thus made to pant was a royal stag, the offender was to lose his liberty for one or two years; and if he was a serf, "let him be held an outlaw, whom the English call a friendless man." For killing a stag the freeman forfeited his freedom and the serf his life.

Bishops, abbots and barons were not to be fined for hunting unless they killed a royal beast.

The provisions against "trespasses to the vert" certainly did not lack in strictness. For the charter

provided that no man should lay hands upon tree or shrub without license from the verderors, and if he cut down a holly or other tree which might furnish food for the game, he was fined twenty shillings in addition to the penalty for a "breach of the King's chase."

The regulation upon the keeping of dogs showed a fine discrimination in the rights, as well as the relative values, of individuals. No "mean person" was allowed to keep greyhounds; but a freeman could keep them, if their knees were cut before the verderors, and without this mutilation, if they dwelt ten miles from the bounds of the forest. If they came nearer, the owner was to pay twelve pence for every mile, and if found within the forest he forfeited the dog and paid ten shillings to the king. Small dogs could be kept without having their knees cut; but if one of these favored creatures ran at large in the forest, his master was required to pay "according to the price of a mean man, which by the ancient law was ten pounds." If the dog bit a wild beast, the fine was "according to the price of a freeman"; and if the victim of such a canine outrage was a "royal beast," the owner of the dog was held "guilty of the greatest offence."

This "lawing of dogs" was to disable them from chasing the deer. Another form of the mutilation, called "expeditating," was provided for in the charter of Henry the Third, which declared that "the lawing of dogges within our forest" should be made every four years, and only by "the view and testimony of honest men," and that he whose dog

The Forest Laws of Old England

was not then found expeditated should be fined three shillings.

The manner of making a dog "lawful" was specially set forth: "And such lawing shall be done by the assize commonly used, that is to say, that four clawes of the forefoot shall be cut off by the skinne." To such exact nicety was the execution of these provisions carried that in Malvern Chase all dogs who could not, or would not, be drawn through a strap eighteen inches and a barley-corn in length, were "hombled," had their claws cut off, and the owner was fined.

This charter of Henry the Third, granted two hundred years after that of Canute, shows an effort to restrict the abuses which had become almost unbearable under the Plantagenets; but it would still hardly meet our present conception of a bill of rights. It provided indeed "that no man from henceforth shall lose neither life nor member for killing of our deere," but the offender was to pay "a grievous fine," and in default of payment he was imprisoned a year and a day, after which he was released on giving security for good behaviour; but if he could not give this security, he had to abjure the realm.

The finding of a dead deer was attended with all the solemn ceremonies of "Crownor's quest law"; in fact it was a more serious matter than finding the body of a man. For such mournful occasions the Charter of Edward the First provided:

If any Deere bee found dead, or wounded, there shalbe an inquisition made by foure of the next villages to the forest,

VERT & VENISON

which shall be written in the roll, the finder shalbe put by vi pledges, and the flesh shalbe sent to a Spittle house if by testimony of the verderors and the Countrey, there bee any nigh: But if there be no such house neere, the flesh shal be given to the poore and lame, the head and skinne shalbe given to the poore of the next towne, and the Arrow (if there bee any found) shalbe presented to the Verderor and inrolled in his roll.

For fear that some soft-hearted reader might misunderstand the charitable purpose of this disposition of the meat, Manwood adds this cloud-dispelling footnote:

This is meant of those Deere that are not sweete, nor meete to be eaten of the best sort of the people; for if a principall beast be found dead and newly killed: that is not meant by this statute to be given to the Lazar house. And if such deere be found dead, there is no doubt but the same deere is the kings, for he was the kings beast being alive, and the killing of him hath not altered the propertie: and then the same being the kings, his Justice of the forest may dispose of it at his pleasure, and that disposition good in law.

Certainly this gives us a clear picture of the mediaeval conception of public charity, and of the great advantage possessed by him who could call himself one of "the best sort of people."

These provisions of this rigorous code were not enforced by the ordinary law courts, but by a special set of forest courts, having no other jurisdiction. There were several of these, of different grades and powers, and it is somewhat difficult to obtain a clear conception of the exact differences between the courts of attachment, swanimote, inquisition, and forest eyre. This difficulty is increased by the fact that anciently the word "court" was not used as it is

The Forest Laws of Old England

now, exclusively with reference to a judicial tribunal. It often referred to assemblies and to those bodies which, like municipal councils, exercised administrative and legislative functions, and which sometimes also acted as judicial tribunals. The "General Court" of the early colonial days in Massachusetts was a body of this dual character. In somewhat broad outline the scheme for enforcing the Forest Laws included a body of executive officers, called foresters, verderors, regardors, warders and rangers, who kept watch of the forest, investigated offenses, apprehended the accused or suspected persons, and presented them for trial at the next session of the court, which had power to inflict punishment. The principal one of these courts was called the "Court of Forest Eyre," a name which indicates that it was an itinerant tribunal composed of justices to whom was assigned the pleasant duty of making an excursion into the forest, and journeying from place to place, hearing the pleas of vert and venison. The men who were haled before the bar of this court by the forest officers were literally "in mercy"; for the records show that accusation seems to have supplied the place of proof. The trials were summary, without a jury, and the hearing was usually upon the record or roll returned by the forest officers.

These records, which are still preserved, are interesting both in showing the trivial character of the offenses for which punishment was meted out, and the sharp and summary character of the procedure. Where the offense was of a serious character, like

VERT & VENISON

hunting the king's deer, or as it was called a "trespass to the venison," the inquisition was usually by the four neighboring towns, who, being held, in a measure, responsible for the offense, were required to appear before the verderors and show whatever they could ascertain with reference to the facts. A record was made showing in detail the facts thus ascertained. The accused was either required to give pledges for his appearance, or if caught "with the manner," was imprisoned, and the record was presented at the next session of the court. Sometimes the towns either failed to attend the inquisition, or to make a satisfactory showing, and for this delinquency were fined or put "in mercy."

A few selections from these thirteenth century records will give a more vivid picture of the times, and of the restrictions which the Forest Laws imposed upon the people, than any mere description.

FROM THE ROLLS OF HUNTINGDON EYRE, A.D. 1248

"It happened on the Sunday next after the feast of St. John the Baptist in the thirty-third year at day-break, that when the foresters of Weybridge and Sapley made watch at Weybridge they came upon two greyhounds, which followed a beast. And afterwards they went into an open field, and found Stephen Foot and a certain Geoffrey the son of Osbert, reapers. And the foresters took the two greyhounds and the aforesaid Stephen and Geoffrey and brought them to Alconbury to await the coming of

The Forest Laws of Old England

the verderors. And in the meantime the aforesaid Geoffrey escaped from the custody of the foresters. And the aforesaid Stephen was brought to the prison at Hartford. The chattels of the aforesaid Stephen were a cow, an ox and a bullock. The price of the chattels was eight shillings. The aforesaid Geoffrey had no chattels. Upon this an inquisition was made on the Tuesday next before the feast (of the Translation) of St. Thomas the martyr by Alconbury, Brampton, Woolley, Buckworth. All are agreed, and say that they suspect no one of the aforesaid matter; nor do they know whence the greyhounds came."

FROM THE ROLLS OF HUNTINGDON EYRE, A.D. 1255

"It is presented by the foresters and verderers that a chaplain and seven clerks were found with bows and arrows in the king's road within the forest. They were taken by the foresters on suspicion. And Hugh of Goldingham, steward of the forest, retained them in prison; and afterwards he delivered them to Simon of Houghton, then sheriff of Huntingdon, who imprisoned them in the prison of Cambridge. And afterwards they were delivered before master Simon of Walton and his fellow justices in eyre at Huntingdon to Robert then the bishop of Lincoln as clerks. And because the said Simon, then the sheriff, did not send word to the said justices that they were taken in the forest by the foresters for an evil deed and for trespass, therefore he is in mercy. And because Simon of Coppingford, the verderer, to whom the bows

VERT & VENISON

and arrows were delivered, that they might have them before the justices, now had them not, therefore he is in mercy."

FROM ROLLS OF HUNTINGDON EYRE, 1255

"Simon of Coppingford, Robert Wynne, John Ballard, Richard le Porter, verderers, are in mercy because they did not present their rolls the first day.

"Richard of Grafham, who was a canon of Huntingdon, contemptuously withdrew from his house, and came through the country as a wanderer; he was suspected. The foresters found him in the house of William of Grafham; and a bow with five little arrows was found there. And they took the said Richard and the bow and the arrows and imprisoned the same Richard. And he came before the justices. And it was testified by the foresters and verderers and by four townships that he was not an evil doer in the forest nor in any respect guilty; therefore he is quit. And the said William in whose house he was found disavowed the bow and the arrows; nor could he say whose they were; and therefore he is in mercy."

HUNTINGDON, A.D. 1252-3

"CERTAIN INQUISITIONS CONCERNING THE VENISON IN
THE FOREST OF ROCKINGHAM IN THE TIME
OF WILLIAM OF NORTHAMPTON

"Bailiwick of Stanion

"It happened on the day of St. Barnabas the Apostle, in the thirtieth year of the reign of King

The Forest Laws of Old England

Henry, that James of Thurlbear, forester in the park of Brigstock, came into the park of Brigstock about the first hour, and found a man, who was called John the son of Stephen Cut of Slipton, carrying a doe's fawn. And the said James took him, and caused Richard of Aldwinkle, the verderer, to be summoned. And he came on the morrow of St. Barnabas, and questioned the said John the son of Stephen about his accomplices; and he said that he had no accomplices. And the said John the son of Stephen Cut was sent to Northampton to be imprisoned. And the sheriff was then Alan of Maidwell.

“And the skin of the aforesaid fawn was delivered to John Lovet, verderer, to have before the justices of the forest.”

“It happened on the Friday next before the feast of St. Edward the king, in the thirtieth year, that Thomas the son of Roger Fulk of Geddington came into the park of Brigstock about midday, and found a hart wounded and dead, and it had one wound in the left side and another on the left part of the neck. And the said Thomas came and met the foresters, and made known to them what he had seen of the dead hart. And an inquisition was made in the park aforesaid on the Saturday next before the feast of St. Edward by four neighboring townships, to wit by Geddington, Brigstock, Stanion, Boughton.

“Geddington comes, and being sworn, says that they saw the said hart, which is dead, and another hart fighting for two days with one another, and that one

VERT & VENISON

hart killed the other; and that it suspects nobody, except this, that it happened accidentally. Brigstock does not come, therefore it finds pledges of making answer before the justices. "And the flesh was given to the poor. And the skin was delivered to Sir Robert Basset, then a verderer."

"In the thirty-first year. It happened on the Sunday next after the Epiphany, in the thirty-first year of the reign of king Henry, that when Maurice de Meht, who said that he was with Sir Robert Passelewe, passed through the town of Sudborough, he saw three men carrying a sack. And when he saw them he suspected them and followed them as far as the town of Sudborough with his bow stretched. And when the aforesaid three men saw him following them they threw away the sack and fled. And the said Maurice de Meht took the sack, and found in it a doe, which had been flayed, and a snare, with which the beast was taken. And when he had done this he went to the church of Sudborough, and made known to the whole township what had happened. And when he had done this he returned again to the sack, and carried away the skin of the doe. And the township of Sudborough sent after the verderers and foresters, who came and found all the things, just as aforesaid. And upon this an inquisition was made at Sudborough before the verderers and foresters of the country by the four neighboring townships, towit, Sudborough, Lowick, Brigstock, Lyveden.

The Forest Laws of Old England

“Sudborough comes and, being sworn, says that Ralph the son of Mabel of Sudborough was one of those men who fled, and he delivered that venison to William the son of Henry of Benefield. And the third was Robert of Grafton, who a short time before was with Agnes Cornet; and he fled, and is not yet found. But the said Agnes Cornet finds pledges on behalf of the said Robert of his being before the justices of the forest, to wit Hugh the son of Roger, and Peter the son of Roger. And the aforesaid Ralph the son of Mabel and William the son of Henry were taken and sent to Northampton to be imprisoned; and they were delivered to Sir Alan of Maidwell, then the sheriff of Northampton.

“The flesh of the doe was given to the lepers of Thrapston.

“And the snare with which the said doe was taken was delivered to Robert the son of Luke of Lyveden, and Ralph the son of Quenyl of the same town, to keep until the coming of the justices of the forest.

“The township of Sudborough finds pledges of being before the justices of the forest, because it allowed Maurice de Meht to carry away the skin of the doe.

“The chattels of Ralph the son of Mabel were taken into the hand of the lord king, and appraised by the verderers and foresters at nine shillings, and they were delivered in bail to Thomas of Grafton, who dwells in Sudborough.

“Robert of Grafton, the fugitive, and William the son of Henry had no chattels.

VERT & VENISON

"Maurice de Meht was not taken because he said that he was with Sir Robert Passelewe, then justice of the forest."

The duty of enforcing the Forest Laws was not confined to the forest officers, nor did the subject fulfill his duties as a loyal liegeman by merely obeying the law himself. A statute of Henry the Second required every dweller in the forest of the age of twelve years and upwards "to swear the Peace of the Forest." We have a picture of the old-time dominance of kingly edicts, if we conjure up the scene of this ceremony: the yeomanry of England, standing unbbonnetted upon the greensward before the Justice in Eyre while, with the royal halberdiers at his back, he administered the oath which bound each man and boy to spy upon his neighbor.

You shall true liege man be unto the king's Majestie;
You shall no hurt doe unto his beasts of the forest.
Nor unto anything that doth belong thereto:
The offenses of other you shall not conceale,
But to the uttermost of your power, you shall them reveale
Unto the officers of the forest,
Or to them that may see the same redrest.
All these things you shall see done,
So help you God at his holie doome.

Truly we may well rejoice that even if we have lost something of our ancestral simplicity, we yet live in an age which regards the forest as part of "God Almighty's out of doors," and the "Peace of the Forest" as a charter of freedom which is not confined to the "beasts of forest, chase and warren."

May, 1906.

Caribou, Goats and Grizzlies

WE had made our fourth camp for a couple of days in a long narrow valley. And that was a very wonderful valley. When we rode out from the edge of the spruces at its lower end and first saw it stretching before us, we reined up and just looked at it and at each other in a silence which was very expressive. Then we shattered the silence with whoops which expressed in admiration what they may have lacked in dignity.

The bottom of the valley was as flat as a floor; for through the ages the stream which wandered down it had deposited the finely powdered rock which the glaciers on the mountains walling it in had ground up in "the mills of the gods." In this a heavy growth of willow had sprung up, so that the stream, whose bed was a black sand which looked like iron filings, was fringed with waving branches whose leaves were already taking on their autumn tint. And that willows and beaver are natural associates was shown by several shapeless piles of sticks and mud with freshly peeled branches lying all about them.

But it was not the willow-covered bottom of the valley, nor the beaver lodges, nor yet the clumps of spruce with heather growing between that excited both our silent and vociferous admiration. For at the far end a noble waterfall poured over the edge of a cliff and sent its water down in a zigzag line of white

VERT & VENISON

through the dark spruces and over the black rocks. And that was something to see; and seeing, to remember; and remembering, to enjoy again.

On the day when we broke camp, the Counselor and I with Otto, the guide, started early so as to keep ahead of the pack train; for in the next valley we were to locate our main hunting camp and we wanted to get into it before the pack horses had a chance to disturb its solitude. The trail took us up past timber line, over a huge snow comb through which the horses had to wallow; then past some small lakes, and finally to a great mountain pass where we could look down into the deep blue of Beaver Dam Valley and off to the wide basin in which we were to camp.

When we began to drop down into this basin, we gave our horses to the guide and walked ahead, hunters now and not mere sightseers; for the season was open and we had not yet fired a shot, and had seen nothing but a few caribou silhouetted against a distant sky line. And that it pays to hunt when you are hunting was at once shown by the immediate appearance of three caribou who ran out from behind a huge rocky pile and stopped within easy range, looking at us with that air of fearless curiosity which so often characterized the caribou in that country. We dropped two of them and thus secured, not what are called "trophies"—for they were small bulls—but an abundant supply of the fresh meat for which we were beginning to long. The word "abundant" is distinctly a relative one and does not by any means

Caribou, Goats and Grizzlies

always indicate the same quantity. For the gross tonnage of meat which two guides and a cook, working with patient industry three times a day, could consume gave us a new standard of quantity.

We left the interior works and a considerable part of the meat in an alluring pile, and this furnished the means of a subsequent adventure. A careful scanning of the valley in which we were to camp revealed no other game, and we rode slowly along through the mist and drizzling rain which by that time had begun to obscure everything. A mile or so up the valley a couple of small lakes lay at the foot of a rocky slope down which ran a stream from the glacier above. And in the rocks where the stream lost itself in the lake, we suddenly saw a great caribou bull. He had been in plain sight all the time, without our seeing him, which illustrates how game seems often to appear by magic in the very place you have been carefully watching. He was a wonderful sight as he stood there by the water's edge, his great antlers literally towering above his head, and spreading out in many branches. He looked at us with a mild sort of interest, as if rather wondering what we were, but on the whole not caring very much about the matter. Occasionally he would glance up the long slope of heather and broken rock which stretched from the lake to the glacier, then "toss his bold frontlet to the sky," and take a few aimless steps toward us or away from us. We watched him with the keenest interest, the rain running off our hat-brims all the time, and we minding it no more than he did. The guide, who

VERT & VENISON

could not appreciate a purely academic interest in such a spectacle, urged us to shoot, saying we could not expect to find a better head. And our reply that, having shot two caribou, we did not care to get another on the same day, no matter how large he was, seemed to him a novel reason for allowing the bull to amble slowly up the hillside until he was out of sight.

The rain soon changed from mere water to that combination of large sticky snowflakes and drizzle which is so much wetter than water ever can be. We looked about for some sort of shelter, beyond that afforded by our slickers. A long, rocky spur from the snow-capped mountain extended down to the valley, and there broke off sharply in a low wall with an overhang sufficient to cut off the descending rain and snow. In front of this there was a lot of fallen rock, piled up like the barbican of an ancient castle, and, by cutting off the wind and the drive of the storm, making a sheltered interior which—by comparison, but only by comparison—was dry and comfortable. We dismounted, leaving our horses "tied to the ground," and took our lunch bags into the rocky guardroom. The first thing we saw on entering was what seemed like indications, not only that it had recently been occupied, but that it had been used as a sort of children's playhouse. For on the low ledge which extended like a seat along the sides of the enclosure were five or six piles of wild flowers and the ornamental tops of weeds. They were arranged with such perfect symmetry and careful attention to detail that they looked exactly as if children had been

Caribou, Goats and Grizzlies

playing there and had left this evidence of their recent presence. Hearing us exclaim with some amazement at this novel sight, Otto informed us that it was the work of "pack" or "trade" rats, who have the strange habit of not only carrying things from one place to another and arranging them with orderly care, but of always putting something in the place of that which they carry away. So these well selected bunches of flowers were designed to replace something which had been taken away, probably bits of moss, or small stones.

We made a smoky fire of the pitchy wood which was the only kind we ever found at timber line, and with a cup of tea and a sandwich, and later a pipe, whiled away the time until we saw the pack train zigzag down from the heights and circle in to the little lake near which we were to camp.

The next morning we were haled out of our sleeping bags by a question which could have but one answer: "Would you like to see some grizzlies?" They were about a mile and a half away, on the long slope across the valley; three of them, a big she with a couple of two- or three-year-old cubs. The old one was literally a perfect monster, black in color, with a tawny, "silver tip" marking that lay across her back and down her shoulders like a saddle blanket. The cubs were brownish and were no kindergarten specimens, but very substantial bears according to all the standards with which I was at all familiar.

We watched them through our glasses to see what their plans for the morning were, so as to arrange our

VERT & VENISON

own movements to coincide with theirs at some convenient point. (You are to understand and keep in mind here that standing on the edge of a narrow gulch through which the early morning wind whistles sharply gives to a man who is clad only in pajamas and field glasses a true appreciation of what is meant by a "nipping and an eager air".)

The bears worked slowly along the mountain above timber line in our general direction until they were opposite our camp, perhaps half a mile away in an air line, but three or four times that distance when one had to follow the contour lines, sharply down into a deep valley, and up the long slope on the other side. There was no snow, and as tracking was impossible on the hard ground, we started out on foot to go down and then up through the scattered clumps of timber, hoping to run across them in some of the open glades, or to find that they had gone up into the wide spaces above timber line. As they would be out of sight as soon as we left the cliff on which our camp was situated, we arranged to have the cook stand on a conspicuous rock where we could see him from the opposite slope, and wig-wag with a towel to show us what the bears had concluded to do. Their ultimate decision was to plunge down into the heavy timber in the narrow valley. So we saw no more of them, and the only indication of their recent presence which we found was a deep hole where the old bear had dug out a whistler for the noonday meal. This expression "noonday meal" recalls most sharply to me that on that day we took no lunch with us, a

Caribou, Goats and Grizzlies

most grievous and regrettable omission, and one which was never repeated, no matter how hurried was the start.

Just as we had come to the conclusion that the bears had become a historical incident, and were no longer a current event, the Counselor saw three goats run along the sky line of the mountain above us and quickly disappear. As goats in the present or future tense were more interesting than bears in the pluperfect, we started after them. On reaching their disappearing point, we had an extended view over the field of operations; for the mountain top was here fairly level, but with plenty of broken rock and small ridges, behind which a great many goats could find effective concealment. The most interesting feature, however, was the box canyon, the upper edge of whose perpendicular walls formed the boundary of one side of the level ground which stretched away before us for a mile or so. This canyon wall was roughly semi-circular and from where we stood we could look across, in what was truly an air line, from one point of the curve to the other. The goats were nowhere in sight, but we knew that, after the habit of their race, they would take to the face of the cliff which dropped down about five hundred feet from its upper edge on which we had halted. The Counselor and Otto then skirted around the canyon until they reached the farther side. The other guide, Bill, and I remained where we were, so that in this way the two parties could, from both vantage points, hold control of the canyon walls.

Soon after the Counselor was out of sight—it is wonderfully easy to get out of sight on a mountain—we saw the goats come out of one of the numerous rounded fissures which, like the folds of a curtain, made up the contour of the face of the cliff. From our side they were in plain view, but as they were a hundred feet or so below the top of the rim rock, I was very doubtful whether the overhang of the cliff might not shut off the Counselor's view from above them. But after what seemed a long time he appeared somewhat beyond them, and from his cautious and strategic advance I could see that he had located them, and was making for a projecting spur from which he could see the narrow ledge on which they stood, and into the dark fold of the rocky curtain into which they occasionally retreated. By great good fortune both he and the goats came within the field of my glasses, and thus I had a rare moving picture of the entire act and of all of the scenes by which it was developed. And to see it was never to forget it.

The Counselor crept, and at last crawled, warily forward, being careful the while to gather moss and not rolling stones which, falling over the edge, might create an untimely panic below. He came so near the place where the cliff ended and there was nothing but atmosphere and distant scenery that I began to feel "gooseflesh." But at last, or rather at *the* last, I saw him sit slowly up astride the jutting rock and settle his rifle comfortably against his shoulder. Then there was a little flash, but no sound, and one goat

Caribou, Goats and Grizzlies

went straight out from the face of the cliff and down two or three hundred feet before he began rolling and bounding the rest of the way. Then the sharp report of the rifle reached me. And with it another and much larger goat came out from the fold of the curtain to the front of the stage to see what was going on in the proscenium box. There was another flash from the Counselor's rifle, and the second one hesitated an instant and then followed the first one in a wild plunge into the nether regions. Then a third came out and at once began to run in my direction. He ran along the narrow ledge at the top of the slide-rock, in and out around the folds of the curtain, following the curve of the cliff, until he came within the range of my rifle, but not within the range of my marksmanship. Though it was something like shooting at a white butterfly on the wing, I cut loose at him with a few ineffectual shots. By this time he was directly below me and out of sight. But a large break in the top of the cliff gave a sort of side view, and Bill went around this, and, beckoning me over, said that he had seen the goat below and thought I could see him by going to the extreme edge. So I went out until there was not room for another step and sat down on a stone with just a foot rest between it and the edge. By leaning forward and twisting sideways, I could see the goat standing below and he flattened out at the first shot. So did I; for instead of rising to my feet in a dignified manner, I lay over backwards until my shoulders were flat on the solid rock and then kicked with my heels until there was a

VERT & VENISON

very appreciable interval between me and the drop-off of that cliff. Truly, when the ardor of the chase is on, a man overlooks many things which impress him sharply when the ardor is off.

The return was a long and a hard one, with more streams and deep gullies to cross than we had observed on the outward trip in the morning, when we were still filled with the ardor of the chase, and breakfast. These two elements when combined make an antidote against weariness, but lose much of their potency when the first is called upon to do duty for both.

During a week or so of rather unpleasant weather following our entrance into the Great Valley the disheveled remains of the caribou which we had shot on the first day were left where they had fallen. One of them we dragged to a more conspicuous place, on a rocky ledge where we could see it from the brow of the hill which sloped down to our camp. We looked it over daily through our glasses, and some of the men went near it when seeking for the horses, to see if any wandering grizzly had been attracted by its presence. It certainly looked like a most alluring bait, though in the cold mountain air it did not acquire that "smelly" character which is desirable in a bait. But one morning Otto rode into camp with the news that a bear had found the carcass and had covered it up with heather, evidently in preparation for another visit. The bear had not eaten any of the meat, from which Otto concluded that he had found

Caribou, Goats and Grizzlies

it when he was not hungry, and would therefore return that afternoon. Well, then,

There was mounting 'mongst Graemes
of the Netherby clan;

and much suppressed excitement. But we had about half a day to mature our plans. And these plans included not only the sudden and violent death of the bear, but procuring his photograph just previous to "the deep damnation of his taking off." This last, and distinctly theatrical, feature of the performance was to be accomplished by setting up a camera, with a flashlight attachment near the bait. A fine wire extending across the carcass of the caribou was to be so arranged that pressure upon it would, by means of a small battery, set off the flashlight and at the same time release the camera shutter. The discharge of the flashlight was to be the signal for us to open fire.

The somewhat complicated details of this performance were duly carried out—up to the point where the bear interfered by forgetting his stage directions.

The bait had been placed on a shelf above which was the sharply defined edge of the plateau which extended in an easy slope up and then down into the Beaver Dam Valley. This hillside beyond, and the ledge of rocks above the shelf on which the bait was placed had a sparse growth of the dwarf spruce which grows in clumps and long hedges at that altitude. Below the bait the cliff went down perhaps a hundred and fifty feet. But springing upward from near the base of this cliff was a great rocky pinnacle, about the size of a skyscraper, and covered on top

VERT & VENISON

with a thick crown of dwarf spruce. The top of this was near enough to the bait to be within fair range, the spruces afforded complete shelter, and we planned to take a comfortable seat among them and await the opening of the play. But things did not work out quite according to our schedule. We set up the camera, braced it with rocks, arranged the flashlight and fastened the wire across the bait in such a way that the bear would be properly in focus when he moved it. Then, noticing that the camera looked rather conspicuous, we thought it would be improved by a covering of brush, and sent Otto up the hill to get some. In a moment we saw him hurrying back, frantically tugging at one of the horses to get him out of sight from the hilltop above, and beckoning to us. We ran over the short snow patch which lay between us, and with great excitement he told us that the bear was coming down the hill just above us. We crawled up to the rocky edge above the bait and stretched out where we could look through the leafy screen of the spruces. By the drawing of lots it had been determined that I was to have the first shot. I looked carefully and very eagerly over the hillside before us, and at first could see nothing but landscape. Then all of a sudden I saw him. The sun had come out—for the first time in a week—and in a flood of sunshine he was marching with solemn dignity down a lane between two spruce hedges straight towards us. The sunlight was rippling on his tawny back and shoulders, and his great head swinging from side to side as he lurched along toward

Caribou, Goats and Grizzlies

a little streamlet that trickled through the heather at the foot of the hill. It was certainly a thrilling sight, and he was doing his full part in the performance. When he reached the streamlet and was out of the cover of the spruces, I cut loose, and, as we soon learned, shot him through the heart. He whirled around, bit at the wound and received another from the Counselor. Then we each fired again, his head went down and it was all over. And that was our first and our last grizzly.

His skin lies on the floor before me as I write, and I can see again the hillside flooded with sunshine, the lane through the spruces, and the bear marching down to keep his appointment with Fate.

A Christmas Grace

In close accord the Christmas board
Binds hearts of hosts and guests;
But e'er we dine our thoughts incline
To what the feast suggests.
Our Yule Log glows; we think of those
Whose hearthstones are less bright;
To them we pray its cheering ray
May penetrate tonight.
For in the mystic waves which run
Through all the stellar space,
We like to think that there is one
For each man of our race:
A wave attune to kindred hearts,
Attune to friendship true;
A wave which finds its counterparts
In every man—and you.

We're grateful for abundance brought,
And laid before our door;
For friendship's ring encircling
A still more precious store.
We hope that all may hear us call
Our greeting to mankind.
Our memory turns to Bobbie Burns,
We bear his words in mind:
"Then let us pray that come it may,
As come it will for a' that,

A Christmas Grace

That sense and worth o'er a' the earth
Shall bear the gree for a' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
It's comin' yet for a' that,
That man to man the world a' o'er
Shall brithers be for a' that."

Christmas, 1922.

PRINTED BY R. R. DONNELLEY
AND SONS COMPANY AT THE
LAKESIDE PRESS, CHICAGO, ILL.





